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Soeren Aaby Kierkegaard

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### I

Essays on Kierkegaard (just as such on many other great men) usually turn out to be no more than mere glimpses of the man and his work given by writers who are either for or against him, just as their studies have led them to see in him either a very great man or (to say the least) a very great enigma. It is therefore extremely difficult to arrive at an objective judgment of Kierkegaard by the study of biographies and historico-doctrinal monographs, no matter how many of them one may read. But to peruse his original writings is to the average student still less satisfactory, for unless he himself has patiently and laboriously plowed through his works, all of which have now appeared in English, he is hardly fair in judging Kierkegaard at all. Yet the average student of Kierkegaard has hardly the time, the ability, and the inclination to devote so much attention to so restricted a subject; all he can do is to read what scholars have written on him and to analyze in the light given him those works of Kierkegaard, either philosophical or theological, in which he is chiefly interested. The result is that he, too, will furnish a glimpse of Kierkegaard which may be of value to others inasmuch as it offers viewpoints and emphases that are all his own. This essay is no more than an attempt on the part of the writer to present to his readers impressions which he has gained from his study of what Kierkegaard himself has written and of what others have written about him.

Kierkegaard's influence on modern religious thought, as mediated especially through Barthian theologians, must certainly be recognized. He has been called by his admirers the "greatest Christian thinker of the nineteenth century," the "accusing angel

of contemporary religion,"<sup>1</sup> "le Pascal du Nord,"<sup>2</sup> "the greatest of all Christian psychologists,"<sup>3</sup> and so forth. On the other hand, as we have been told by a Kierkegaard *Kenner* of note, he has been known also as the "Schopenhauer of Denmark." Even Mackintosh admits that Kierkegaard "at last began to preach openly the negation of life" and "felt a growing sympathy with Schopenhauer."<sup>4</sup> Carl Meusel in his well-known *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, on the other hand, points out that his life and work were of great value to the Church of his day,<sup>5</sup> and in *Die Kirchliche Zeitschrift*<sup>6</sup> Prof. W. Rodemann devotes a lengthy and thorough article, "Kierkegaard's Einfluss auf die nordische Theologie und Kirche," to the far-reaching influence of Kierkegaard's work, in particular on Scandinavian religious thought and church life. It is true, for a long time Kierkegaard was almost entirely forgotten, but today he again is in the limelight, and the fact that all his works have now been translated into English proves how highly he is regarded by many in the English-speaking world. Our periodical will therefore do well to take notice of him.<sup>7</sup>

## II

Kierkegaard's life was lived in that calm and uneventful way which the retiring author, busy with the publication of his works, chose for himself because by such very simplicity and seclusion he could best serve the cause to which he had devoted himself. He was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, on May 5, 1813, in a spacious, pretentious residence, which his retired, wealthy, but eccentric father had bought shortly before. It stood alongside the city hall, which faced a large square called the New Market. His father, a former manufacturer and merchant, was 57 years old at Soeren's birth and lived until his youngest son had become a man

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *American Lutheran*, Vol. XXII, No. 10, October, 1939, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*: Strasbourg-Bureau de la Revue: 1. bis, Quai Saint-Thomas; Seizième Année — No. 1; p. 46; Janvier-Fevrier, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 218. H. R. Mackintosh; Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 353.

<sup>5</sup> *Sub Kierkegaard*.

<sup>6</sup> 46. Jahrgang, Heft 1, Januar 1922. Wartburg Publishing House, Waverly, Iowa.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Lowrie in his excellent *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1942, publishes the complete list of Kierkegaard's works which till 1942 had appeared in English. Since then the few remaining works not yet translated have also appeared in English.

of 25 years.<sup>8</sup> Of old Michael Pederson Kierkegaard's seven children but two survived him: Soeren Aaby, his last-born, and Peder Christian, his first-born, who later became a bishop in the Danish State Church and was throughout his life the very opposite and, in a way, also the opponent of his younger brother.

The student of Soeren Kierkegaard who wishes to understand his life and work must first learn to understand his ancestry and the strict, if not austere, training which he received in his early childhood. As a man he complained: "As a child I was strictly and most severely trained in the Christian religion. Humanly speaking, this bringing up was a species of madness, for my earliest childhood was made to groan under impressions too heavy even for the melancholy old man who laid them upon me."<sup>9</sup> Again: "I have never enjoyed the happiness of being a child."<sup>10</sup> This austerity of training largely had its source in the melancholy, hypochondriac attitude of his father, who, having once cursed God in the bitterness of his youthful experiences, imagined himself all his life to have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. Kierkegaard writes of this, no doubt, with a deep shudder: "How terrible about the man who once as a little boy, while herding the flocks on the heaths of Jutland, suffering greatly, in hunger and in want, stood upon a hill and cursed God—and the man was unable to forget it even when he was eighty-two years old."<sup>11</sup> Despite his father's harshness and moroseness Soeren was greatly attached to him and expressed his love toward him not merely by word but also by deed. Of him he writes gratefully: "I owe everything, from the beginning, to my father. When, melancholy as he was, he saw me melancholy, his prayer to me was: Be sure that you really love Jesus."<sup>12</sup> The father, who was stern and demanding, was also a brilliant thinker and, after his fashion, a devoted Christian, who never failed to attend church and hear friendly Bishop Mynster's impressive sermons. From active business the father retired at the age of 40, devoting himself to eager study and serious contemplation as also, in particular, to the training of his

<sup>8</sup> Cf. chaps. I and II of *Something About Kierkegaard*, by D. F. Swenson. Revised and enlarged edition, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1945; also *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*, by W. Lowrie. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J., 1942; above all, Lowrie's large biography of Kierkegaard. Oxford University Press, 1938.

<sup>9</sup> *The Point of View*, p. 76; quoted in *Something About Kierkegaard*, page 5.

<sup>10</sup> *The Journals of Kierkegaard*. Edited and translated by Alexander Dru. Oxford University Press, New York, 1938. P. 279, par. 860; quoted in *Something About Kierkegaard*, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Dru: *Journals*, p. 150, par. 556.

<sup>12</sup> Dru: *Journals*, p. 246, par. 773.

youngest son, of whom he seems to have been quite proud. No wonder Soeren manifested his attachment by dedicating numerous works to his memory. Writes Professor Swenson: "It is moving to note the stereotyped regularity with which each succeeding volume of Kierkegaard's religious addresses was inscribed: 'To my deceased Father, Michael Pederson Kierkegaard, formerly a woolen merchant here in town.'" <sup>13</sup> The sad fellowship between father and son is well depicted in Kierkegaard's following description of it: "There once lived a father and a son. A son is a mirror in which the father sees himself reflected, and the father is also a mirror in which the son sees himself reflected as he will be in the future. But these two rarely contemplated one another thus, for their daily intercourse was through a gay and lively conversation. But it sometimes happened that the father stopped and faced his son with saddened visage, let his eye dwell upon him, and said to him, 'Poor boy, you are the victim of a silent despair!' Nothing more was ever said, either of what it meant or of how true it might be. The father thought that he was the cause of his son's melancholy, and the son thought that it was he who had caused his father so much grief—but never a word was exchanged between them on the subject." <sup>14</sup>

But it must not be thought that the large and well-furnished home of Michael Pederson Kierkegaard was a sort of melancholy madhouse, in which there was neither joy nor a healthy interest in life. There was, in fact, much love for study and culture and, if we may piece together Soeren's occasional remarks to this effect, a good deal of worldliness, too. In *Zwischen den Zeiten* <sup>15</sup> Hermann Diem admits that there is much in Kierkegaard that is "pathological" (psychoneurotic), but he warns the reader that one must not regard his psychology in any other way than normal, though perhaps mediocre. Mackintosh regards Kierkegaard's psychology as abnormal and calls attention to the fact that he has been called the man "of extraordinary intelligence with a sick imagination." <sup>16</sup> Douglas V. Steere, however, in *Christendom* <sup>17</sup> says, in a review of *Kierkegaard og Pengene*: "It [the book] shatters the legend and shows conclusively that Kierkegaard lived comfortably on a decent income derived from his father's property; that he did take interest on money; that he allowed himself certain little extravagances that garnished a life which during the

<sup>13</sup> *Something About Kierkegaard*, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Stages on Life's Way*, p. 192.

<sup>15</sup> "Methode der Kierkegaardforschung," Vol. 6, p. 162.

<sup>16</sup> *Types of Modern Theology*, p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> Vol. III, No. 1, p. 151. Winter, 1938.



years of his almost unbelievable productivity was devoted to his writing from morning until into the night; that he and his estate derived more from the sale of books than has customarily been thought; that his gifts to the poor were substantial but not Franciscan in character; and finally that the customary account of his inheritance's being just used up at the time of his death is correct." The fact is, so far as one may judge from Kirkegaard's own writings, that he was a confirmed ascetic neither before nor after his father's death, but lived a comfortable life that was to his own liking, even though it was uneventful. W. Lowrie in his well-written *A Short Life of Kierkegaard* even has this detail: "During the month of November, 1847, he had *Gaensebraten* four times, larded lamb four times, salmon twice—not to speak of more ordinary viands. The inventory of his house reveals that when he died, there were thirty bottles of wine left."<sup>18</sup>

In his wealthy and cultured home young, brilliant Soeren, then, grew up, instructed by his father, instructing himself by much private reading, and attending such schools in Copenhagen as wealthy citizens would choose for their favorite sons.<sup>19</sup> In 1830 he matriculated at the University of Copenhagen and took up the study of theology, devoting also considerable time to philosophy and esthetics. He did not, however, complete his theological studies until after the death of his father, when, as a sort of tribute to him, he wrote the dissertation and passed the examination that entitled him to the ministry in the Danish State Church. Kierkegaard did not contemplate becoming a pastor, though later in his life, it seems, he planned to spend his last days in parish work, after having finished his self-chosen calling as writer of books which, in his estimation, the world so greatly needed. The opportunity, however, never came. Only twice did he leave his beloved Copenhagen to study in Berlin, the seat and source of the philosophy which had spread from Germany into Denmark and which he gradually learned to hate with a perfect hatred.

Sooner than he expected the busy pen fell from his limp hands. On October 2, 1855, he became unconscious as he was out taking a walk. It was found that his legs were paralyzed. He was taken to Frederik Hospital, where he expressed the thought that he had come here to die. Just before this mishap he had drawn the last funds left in the bank of his father's, originally not meager, inheritance. It sufficed to pay for his hospital expenses and for his funeral. In the hospital his life was sustained for forty days.

<sup>18</sup> P. 7; cf. also what W. Lowrie writes of his visits to King Christian VII, as also Kierkegaard's own remarks in his *Journals* on his association with Denmark's great men.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*, pp. 43 ff.

His sickness was attributed to a disease of the spine, but he himself declared his ailment to be psychic. Visitors friendly to him were admitted to see him, but not any ministers of the State Church, since by this time he had completely broken with the Danish State Church. A friend of his youth, however, Pastor Boesen, insisted on seeing him daily until near the end, when he was called away from town. Faithful as a pastor, he subjected Kierkegaard to frequent catechetical inquisitions. When thus he asked the patient whether he would receive Holy Communion, Kierkegaard replied that he would receive it from a layman, but not from a pastor. When he was reminded that this attitude certainly was not right, he replied categorically: "Then I die without it. I have made my choice." When he was asked whether he could pray to God in peace, he answered: "Yes, that I can." When Pastor Boesen said: "And this, then, is all because you believe and take refuge in God's grace in Christ?" he said: "Why, of course; what else?" The question of his burial was a rather delicate matter, since his last months had been spent in bitter attacks upon the Church. But finally it was decided to hold the funeral service in the Frue Kirke, the Bishop's cathedral, though the only ministers who officiated there were his brother, Peter Kierkegaard, and Dean Tryde. At the cemetery, however, Kierkegaard's nephew, Henrik Lund, contested the right of the Church to appropriate his uncle's body, and reading from John's letter to the Laodiceans, who were neither hot nor cold, he so vehemently held forth that the funeral gathering gradually dispersed and no church committal service was held. Kierkegaard was buried in the family lot, but the grave was not marked, and later on, when a marble slab was chosen to mark his burial place, it was made to lean against the pedestal of his father's monument. Thus father and son, who during their lives had been associated so long and intimately, were also united in death, Soeren's slab leaning against that of his father, just as the son had leaned upon his father while he was a child and a youth.<sup>20</sup>

To the reader it might appear as if we had crowded Kierkegaard's life and death too closely together. But Kierkegaard never lived to an old age; when he died, he was only a little more than forty-two years old. Within this short span of life, however, he had produced a vast number of books, all of which stood in close relation to the problems of his time, especially its religious and philosophical thought. In a well-written article, favorable to Kierkegaard, in the *Lutheran Church Review*, Prof. Adolf Hult

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. for further details Lowrie's readily accessible *A Shorter Life of Kierkegaard*, pp. 253 ff.

groups his career around four deeply felt experiences, or crises, that had an important bearing on his life and literary work.<sup>21</sup> The first was that of his "conversion," when on Sunday, April 22, 1838, he wrote in his diary: "If Christ shall enter in to dwell in me, it must come about according to the superscription above the Gospel of the day in the almanac: 'Christ enters in through closed doors.'" A few years before, Kierkegaard, being a university student and moving in circles which were downright worldly, if not profligate, had joined them in a life of sinful pleasure, though perhaps he had never become guilty of gross immorality. Of this perverse life he seriously repented as long as he lived, and from this deep and continuing repentance came the earnest desire to dedicate himself entirely to Christ in true fellowship, following Him in His footsteps of suffering. To this must be added the severe blow that struck him when on August 9, 1838, his aged father passed away, and that not until Soeren had discovered his soul-crushing secret, which had weighed and preyed on his mind for some threescore years and ten, his conviction that he had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost by cursing God in an hour of despair. Since then and until his death Kierkegaard devoted his life to make clear to his contemporaries what he thought it means to be a Christian.

The second experience crisis came soon afterwards, when on September 10, 1840, moved perhaps by the depressing loneliness which befell him because of his father's demise, he became engaged to Regina Olsen, a carefree, sunny, inexperienced young girl, who loved him with an honest and deep love and whom, again, he loved no less. Very soon, however, Kierkegaard realized that it would be sinful to join this innocent young girl to himself since he was so hopelessly melancholy and dedicated to an otherworldly cause. There is no reason to assume with Professor Brandes, a noted biographer of Kierkegaard, that physical causes impelled Kierkegaard to break off the engagement.<sup>22</sup> Hult no doubt is right in stating that he did it "out of love and pity for his beloved, fearing the tragical consequences of his deep melancholy, inherited from his father." So the engagement was broken off, and although Regina Olsen was afterwards happily, and very advantageously, married, Kierkegaard never quite overcame the agony of his broken engagement. Of her he speaks again and again in his *Journals*, where he says, for example: "When I left 'her,' I asked one thing of God—that I might succeed in writing and finishing *Either-Or* . . . and so to a country parsonage; for that, I thought,

<sup>21</sup> Vol. 25, No. 1, January, 1906, pp. 54 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Hult's article "Soeren Kierkegaard," *Lutheran Church Review*, page 67.

was the proper expression for giving up the world."<sup>23</sup> Despite his sorrow, however, Kierkegaard remained fairly busy. Eleven days before the engagement crisis, on September 29, 1841, he held his disputation for the philosophical doctor's degree, and ten days after the crisis he received his doctorate. On July 3, 1840, he had passed his theological examination.

Had no further crisis occurred in Kierkegaard's life, he now might have become ordained and finally settled down as a parish priest. But the moral dissolution in Europe since the July Revolution in 1830 had influenced also Denmark, where a frivolous, unprincipled spirit prevailed. The ungodly spirit of Copenhagen's worldly populace was reflected especially in *The Corsair* (*Korsåren*), edited by a brilliant, but corrupt Jew, Meir Aaron Goldschmidt. *Korsåren* had praised Kierkegaard's books and hailed him as Denmark's foremost writer, whereupon honest Kierkegaard begged the editor not to commend him since his flippant praise could be regarded by him in no other way than as a deliberate insult. This happened in 1845, when Kierkegaard was thirty-two years old. Goldschmidt replied to Kierkegaard by deriding and caricaturing him so grossly that he became the butt of ridicule in the whole town, and he no longer dared to show himself anywhere. But *Korsåren* overdid its sordid work, and the result was that within half a year it had to go out of business. The returning boomerang struck the supercilious Goldschmidt and drove him out of town. Kierkegaard, however, was so greatly vexed by the experience that he turned all the more diligently to his self-chosen task of publishing religious books, by which he would call people to repentance.

The final experience or crisis came near Kierkegaard's end. In his religious writings Kierkegaard had emphasized a *personal* Christian faith and life over against the formalism of his age. The fault of this externalism, in his estimation, lay not so much with the people as with the clergy of the State Church, whose rationalistic and pantheistic (Hegelian) views made it impossible for them to be true Christians. Kierkegaard nevertheless attended church regularly. When, however, on January 30, 1854, Bishop Mynster died and Prof. H. L. Martensen took Mynster's place as Bishop of Zealand, and when, moreover, Martensen in an official eulogy praised his predecessor as an outstanding witness to the truth, Kierkegaard could no longer restrain himself, and he published one violent, invective article after another against the State Church and its clergy, first in the widely read paper *Fædrelandet* (*The Fatherland*) and after that in his own organ, *The Moment*, of

<sup>23</sup> Dru: *Journals*, p. 490, par. 1294.

which nine numbers were published, the last in September, 1855. But the exertion proved too much for his strength. Attacking others, he wore out himself. He died on November 11, 1855, 42 years and 6 months old.

In agreement with these four experiences, or crises, of Kierkegaard, Professor Hult divides his works into four classes, though usually they are classified merely as the *esthetic*, 1843—1846, and the *religious*, 1846—1855. Dr. Hult's grouping is as follows: (1) The preparatory writings, including a literary review of a writing by Hans Christian Andersen, the philosophical essay "On the Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates," his doctor's thesis, quite Hegelian in spirit and expression, but nevertheless prophetic of his later works, and a number of newspaper articles, some of which stirred up no little excitement, as, for example, his "Defense for the Emancipation of the Women," which was written when Kierkegaard was only 21 years old. In reality, however, it was no more than a piece of irony. (2) The *esthetic-philosophical* writings, with occasional psychologico-religious writings interspersed, as, for example, *Either-Or* (1843); *Fear and Trembling* (1843); *Repetition* (*Gjentagelse*), in the same year; *Philosophical Fragments* (1844); *The Concept of Anguish* (1844); *Stages on the Way of Life* (1845), and also minor writings, religious, humorous, and polemical. (3) The *religious* and *religious-philosophical* writings, to which belong *Edifying Addresses* (1847); *The Works of Love* (1847); *Christian Addresses* (1847); *The Sickness unto Death* (1849); *Exercise in Christianity* (1850); *Concerning My Activity as Author* (1851); *For Self-Trial* (1852); *Judge for Yourself* (posthumous, 1876), and many others. (4) The *ecclesiastical denunciatory* writings, in which Kierkegaard ruthlessly attacked the "official Christianity" of the State Church. Of these writings especially the condemnatory *This Must Be Said—Then Be It Said* (May, 1855), which was his ultimatum to the secure, impersonal Christianity of the "official Church" was widely read.<sup>24</sup>

### III

It goes beyond the scope of a brief essay to analyze Kierkegaard's various writings and, since this investigation concerns religion only, to discuss at length his basic philosophical premises. But a general characterization of his religious beliefs and aims as set forth in his various writings is indeed necessary, though not even this is a simple task and easy of execution.

<sup>24</sup> When Dr. Hult wrote his valuable article, very few of Kierkegaard's works had been translated into English; consequently he read them in the original and supplied the titles himself. In later translations the title wording is somewhat different, though not essentially so.



The following opinions may interest the reader as showing how extremely complex and difficult it is rightly to judge Kierkegaard. He himself put forth the claim that all his writings are fundamentally religious, serving an ultimate religious end. There is much truth in this affirmation, for, after all, the line of demarcation between philosophy and theology in Kierkegaard's writings is hard to trace. To him philosophy was religious in essence and religion philosophical. As a person reads his works, he gains the impression that to Kierkegaard his calling as a writer seemed to be a sort of atonement for the sins of his father, his own, and his contemporaries. Evidently he had the conviction that he was called by God to be a "voice in the wilderness." There was, no doubt, much compensation in this dedication, and from it he derived no little satisfaction.

W. S. Ferrie, in *The Evangelical Quarterly*,<sup>25</sup> in an article entitled "Kierkegaard: Hamlet or Jeremiah," closes his keen analysis of the man and his work with the words, which, we believe, are very fitting: "That experience [his personal tragedy throughout his life], which might have made him a Hamlet (with whom he has often been compared), did not in fact do so, but made him instead — if we must seek some comparison — a Jeremiah, a prophet for whom *via crucis* was *via lucis*." This agrees with the judgment of Eduard Platzhoff in the *Theologische Rundschau*,<sup>26</sup> in which he calls Kierkegaard "den Apostel des Ernstes und der Verinnerlichung" (S. 135) and says of him that he died as the "Wahrheitszeuge, der das Christsein wieder einmal schwer gemacht hat in einer Zeit, die es damit gar zu leicht nahm" (S. 226).

Hermann Diem, in *Zwischen den Zeiten*,<sup>27</sup> judges that it is very difficult to receive Kierkegaard among the theologians ("Kierkegaard unter die Theologen aufzunehmen"), and that because he does not present anywhere in his works a systematic (comprehensive) church doctrine. Then he goes on to say, pointing out the difference between Kierkegaard and Barth: "Karl Barth nimmt dagegen in seiner Dogmatik entschlossen den Standpunkt in der Kirche und bemueht sich um eine Kirchenlehre. Damit ist aber fuer ihn die Abgrenzung gegen Kierkegaard gegeben. Er braucht eine Lehre, auch wenn sie nur in der Form der Prolegomena moeglich ist. Zu einer solchen hat aber Kierkegaard direkt nichts zu sagen und Barth erwaeht ihn auch nur noch an zwei Stellen, ohne sich auf ihn fuer seine Arbeit zu be-

<sup>25</sup> James Clarke & Company, Ltd., London; Vol. VIII, 1936, p. 147.

<sup>26</sup> "Soeren Kierkegaard"; Vol. 4, Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tuebingen und Leipzig, 1901.

<sup>27</sup> "Methode der Kierkegaardforschung," Vol. 6, p. 170.



rufen (S. 72 und 404). Der Begriff des Paradoxen kommt ueberhaupt nicht mehr vor. Das dient wesentlich zur Klaerung der theologischen Lage. Wieweit Kierkegaard nach wie vor durch seine Problematik indirekt in der Barthschen Theologie wirkt, ist natuerlich eine andere Frage. Aber direkt kann sich Barth nicht mehr auf ihn berufen. Wenn das Unternehmen der Dogmatik wirklich gewagt wird, kann Kierkegaard nur noch als 'Korrektiv' dabei sein."

W. G. Moore, in *The Hibbert Journal*,<sup>28</sup> analyzes Kierkegaard's objective as a religious writer thus: "Living as a Christian, he is trying to deal with the philosophical explanation of the life of his own generation. In this process he meets of course, first and foremost, a system of thought which is in many ways the most imposing of modern times, the philosophy of Hegel. Not only is his whole work a commentary on that system, but he finds himself and becomes sure of his own real existence as a personality through an increasingly radical repudiation of Hegel. So that we could not unfairly say that where Hegel is right, Kierkegaard is wrong; where Kierkegaard is right, Hegel must be wrong" (p. 571 f.). He believes that Kierkegaard deserves a hearing today on various counts: "He recalls us to the mysteries of the personality, to the reality of God, to the truths which are to be known only by participation and decision" (p. 581).

Edmund P. Clowney, Jr., in the *Westminster Theological Journal*,<sup>29</sup> judging Kierkegaard purely from his philosophical works, views his whole metaphysical objective as a polemic against the essential principle of Hegelianism, namely, that "thought and being are one," and he says: "Against the speculative world-history system of Hegel, Kierkegaard would place as the canon of reality the existing Individual" (p. 36). Ultimately Dr. Clowney reaches this conclusion: "Kant, Hegel, and Kierkegaard stand on the same ground as over against Christianity. The ethical construction of Kierkegaard's Individual is vitiated by the relativism which the skeptic cannot escape. . . . The pathos of Kierkegaard's Individual may provide at least this service: it may call attention to the fact that there is a terror in the heart of a man who, ruling out God, attempts to be a god for himself. The force behind Soeren Kierkegaard's efforts is indeed despair: it is the despair of the autonomous Individual perishing in his own relativism. There is bitter irony in the fact that his dirge of pagan darkness

<sup>28</sup> "Kierkegaard and His Century"; October, 1937, to July, 1938, pp. 568 ff.

<sup>29</sup> "A Critical Estimate of Soeren Kierkegaard's Notion of the Individual," Vols. IV and V, November, 1941, to May, 1943, pp. 29 ff.

clothes itself in the language of Christian truth, which alone brings light" (p. 61).

Emanuel Hirsch, in *Zeitschrift fuer systematische Theologie*,<sup>30</sup> arrives at this conclusion concerning Kierkegaard: "Er hat die Menschen nicht mit dem Christlich-Religioesen gleich als mit einer toedlichen Forderung ueberfallen . . . er ist zu ihnen hingegangen und hat sie den Weg der Innerlichkeit zum Christentum zu fuehren gesucht. Er ist dem Humanen gegenueber nicht der Feind, sondern ein bei aller Strenge verstehender und liebender παιδαγωγός εις Χριστόν" (p. 144).

E. Gomann, in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*,<sup>31</sup> has this to say: "Kierkegaard accused Luther of having confused the spiritual with the secular *telos* when he taught that the faithful performance of daily duties were *Gottesdienst*. That was indeed a mistake on the part of the great thinker. For Luther was far from substituting work for worship. On the contrary, he intended to show that true worship is not confined to Sundays and festal days, nor is it left to the priests, but that it pervades everyday life and sanctifies the humblest occupation. But I wonder if, in this industrial age which idolizes labor, the higher aim of life is not pushed aside and the spiritual *telos*, if served at all, reduced to a 'Sunday business.' For without the belief in work righteousness there is so much 'activism,' or rather *Treiberei* in the Church of today that one would think Luther's *Gottesdienst* is 'workshop' rather than worship, an ordinary business rather than the contemplation and aspiration of the highest value—God and fellowship with Him through the atonement. On the other hand, seeing that the deeper meaning of justification by faith is largely lost to the twentieth-century man, and that for many grace has become a pillow of self-contentment, proud humility, and spiritual laziness, Kierkegaard's 'fear and trembling' can stir up our hearts to self-examination and reorientation and fill us with new zeal for the Kingdom of God. For the 'individual before God' cannot lie down in idleness on a 'confirmed faith.' He must love as well as believe and work." (P. 407 f.)

O. P. Kretzmann, in the *American Lutheran*,<sup>32</sup> closes his brief, but excellent estimate of Kierkegaard and his work thus: "It is true, of course, that Kierkegaard was not a Lutheran in the historic sense of the word. His doctrine of inspiration is liberal. He has only contempt for the Church. At times his statements, especially in the *Journals*, are not even Christian. He has no system of

<sup>30</sup> "Kierkegaards Erstlingsschrift," Vol. 8, pp. 90 ff.; Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, Goettingen, 1931.

<sup>31</sup> "Soeren Kierkegaard and His Message," Vol. XVI, 1943, pp. 393 ff.

<sup>32</sup> "Soeren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth," Vol. 22, No. 10, October, 1939, p. 8.

theology and no roots in confessional Lutheranism. After this has been said, however, the fact remains that in calling man back to the concepts of sin, repentance, and faith he performed a remarkable service to the Church of the twentieth century."

F. R. Hellegers, in *The Presbyterian*,<sup>33</sup> offers this appraisal of Kierkegaard: "We, too, suffer from a smug, complacent Christianity, one which has removed the offense by becoming secular: Christ has become one in whom all are expected to be pleased; we vainly imagine that it is easy to be like Him; we forget that the men of His own day were deeply offended by Him; we ignore the fact that the wisdom of God must appear to worldly men as foolishness; we think that we can understand Christianity merely by studying it rather than by living it; ours, too, is a generation of admirers rather than followers of the Christ; we, too, lay violent hands on sacred things and forget that God can be known only by men who know awe and wonder, reverence and humility. Should we take Soeren Kierkegaard as our guide in theological thinking today? It would be rather difficult to do so and also rather unwise. He himself had no such thought in mind; he was not interested in building up a great system which others should follow; he wrote for 'that single individual whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader.' His interest was not that of developing all the great beliefs of Christianity, but rather that of plumbing this and that depth. And there he has few rivals."

William T. Riviere, writing in *The Christian Century*,<sup>34</sup> says: "To Kierkegaard the world as we can see it and live in it is not an open door toward God but a closed door. The door can be opened only from the other side. The door opened and the Gospels record what happened. This revelation reached Kierkegaard through the Bible. He humbly trusted his life and his soul to God, as he understood God and God's will. Unaffected by the beginnings of literary and historical criticism of the Bible, he would probably have remained unaffected today. To him, truth was subjective, but not all subjectivity was truth. And since he disliked professors anyway, one fears that the dialectic of criticism — the historical Jesus, the apocalyptic Jesus, form criticism — would have caused him to remark that the very sayings outweigh the lucubrations of professors who dissect the words in which the sayings reach us. In his last violent polemic Kierkegaard charged that the visible church and its ministers are characterized by an absolute lack of Christianity: 'Christianity is not there!' . . .

<sup>33</sup> "Kierkegaard and the Church," Vol. CXII, No. 16, April 16, 1942, page 5.

<sup>34</sup> "Introducing Kierkegaard," Vol. LVI, No. 39, Sept. 27, 1939, p. 1164 f.

Kierkegaard was an extremist, of course. . . . A good deal of the vitriol which Kierkegaard poured on his contemporaries in his native land ought to burn some of us American pastors; it has put some blisters on me."

Very aptly, in the writer's estimation, M. Storck, Bethel bei Bielefeld, in *Der Geisteskampf der Gegenwart*<sup>35</sup> sums up Kierkegaard's central theme. He writes: "Kierkegaards Anklage ist die: Das Christentum des Neuen Testaments ist untergegangen in Menschlichkeit. 'Welchen Sinn hat es doch, dass alle diese Tausende und aber Tausende ohne weiteres sich *Christen* nennen? Diese vielen, vielen Menschen, von denen die weitaus ueberwiegende Mehrzahl, soweit man ueberhaupt urteilen kann, das Leben in ganz andern Kategorien fuehrt, wovon man sich durch die einfachste Beobachtung ueberzeugen kann. Menschen, die niemals in die Kirche gehen, die niemals an Gott denken, nie seinen Namen nennen, ausgenommen, wenn sie fluchen! Menschen, denen es nie klar geworden ist, dass ihr Leben irgendwie Gott gegenueber verpflichtet ist. Doch alle diese Menschen, selbst die, die behaupten, dass Gott nicht da sei, sie sind alle *Christen*, werden vom Staat als Christen anerkannt, werden von der Kirche als *Christen* begraben und als *Christen* in die Ewigkeit entlassen.' Das ist das Verbrechen, Christ zu sein, ohne Bekenner zu sein, ohne Nachfolger zu sein. Wie kommt es aber, dass die Lehre von der Gnade, wonach der Suender selig wird, heute so viele 'Christen' als Anhaenger hat? Die Propheten des Alten Bundes, die Apostel, die Christus selber in die Welt sandte, sind um ihrer Verkuendigung willen verfolgt und getoetet worden. Seit langem ist die Christenheit aber keine verfolgte Christenheit mehr. Das sollte uns zu denken geben. Es bleiben nur noch zwei Moeglichkeiten der Erklaerung bei einer solchen Sachlage. Das Wort Gottes, das zu uns spricht als zu den immer Widersprechenden, hat mit den Herzensmeinungen des natuerlichen Menschen einen innigen Herzensbund geschlossen — oder aber die Menschen haben die Feindschaft gegen Gottes Wort abgelegt. Da ist etwas nicht in Ordnung, sagt uns Kierkegaard, und weist uns mit grenzenloser Ruecksichtslosigkeit auf unsere Unwahrhaftigkeit, auf unser staendiges Besserwissenwollen, wo Gott immer recht hat und wir immer unrecht. Wo wir nicht bereit sind, aus der Reflexion und dem Sinnenbetrug eines ungelebten Lebens ein Leben der Wirklichkeit vor Gott zu leben, da verfallen wir in die furchtbarste aller Suenden, Gott zu vergewaltigen und ihn zum Narren zu machen. In dieser absolut verkannten Lage des Menschen vor Gott sieht Kierkegaard die Schuld unseres Lebens. *Es waere das Traurigste, was gedacht*

<sup>35</sup> "Soeren Kierkegaard und wir," Vol. 69, No. 9, 1933, p. 339.

werden kann, wenn ein Mensch durch das Leben hindurchginge, ohne zu entdecken, dass er Gottes bedarf.' Das hat uns Kierkegaard mit nicht misszuverstehender Deutlichkeit wieder vor Augen gestellt. Das ist sein Verdienst und seine Mission an unsere Zeit." (P. 342 f.)

The problem of Kierkegaard is stated more or less clearly in all of these quotations, which have been selected not at random, but very carefully and from all sorts of writers: Lutheran and Reformed, orthodox and liberal. Briefly stated, Kierkegaard's objective in all his writings, no matter whether philosophical or religious, was to expose to his contemporaries the offense of formalism, of lip service, of religious hypocrisy, and to lead men back to what he regarded as true Christianity.

#### IV

The complaint has been voiced that Kierkegaard's writings make such difficult reading that he will never be popular even in learned circles. That is true, and Kierkegaard himself wanted to have it that way. His appeal was never to the masses, but always to the individual. M. Storck, in his article "Soeren Kierkegaard und wir"<sup>36</sup> puts it plainly and correctly when he writes: "Die Frage nach der Gemeinde stellt Kierkegaard nicht. Jeder Mensch ist einsam, immer und ueberall, und deshalb auch in seiner Kampfstellung Gott gegenueber. Vielleicht liegt hier einer der wichtigsten Angriffspunkte, der gegen Kierkegaards Theologie im engeren und weiteren Sinn ernsthaft erhoben werden koennte." What adds to the difficulty of perusing and understanding Kierkegaard's works is not so much his speculative thought, which often is purposely couched in vague and mysterious expressions, as rather his peculiar "indirect impartation" by a Socratic pedagogy, his "double-reflectivity," as Adolf Hult so well calls it. But the study of Kierkegaard also has its compensations, and the patient reader is apt to find himself very much attracted by his complex, subtle dialectic and wit.<sup>37</sup>

It is remarkable, however, that Kierkegaard in his specifically religious works, in which, in a special way, he appeals to the reader's soul, such as *Fear and Trembling*; *Edifying Addresses*; *Christian Addresses*; *Training in Christianity*; *For Self-Examination*; *Judge for Yourselves*; *The Sickness unto Death*, often speaks with a clarity and persuasiveness that makes these works the most desirable of all he has written, no matter whether the reader finds

<sup>36</sup> *Der Geisteskampf der Gegenwart*, Vol. 69, No. 9, p. 343.

<sup>37</sup> For sheer delight read Kierkegaard's *Kritik der Gegenwart*. Translated by Theodor Haecker. 2d edition, Brenner-Verlag, Innsbruck, 1922.



himself *en rapport* with the author or not. They also clarify Kierkegaard's peculiar religious problem.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the most climactic of Kierkegaard's writings are *The Sickness unto Death*; *Training in Christianity*; *For Self-Examination*; *This Must Be Said—Then Be It Said*. In these works he bitterly condemns the Christianity of his age and demands a Christianity which consists in absolute imitation of the confessing, suffering Christ. He exhorts those who call themselves Christians to concede that while indeed they name themselves after Christ, they do not live after Him, and that not any word or institution of the Church, but the *fear of God* decides whether one is a Christian or not. In the last-named tract, which appeared in May, 1855, he even demands that Christians who cherish their salvation should no longer attend church since by staying away from public service they at least do not commit the sin of treating God as a fool. In these appeals Kierkegaard reaches the utmost extreme of religious fanaticism: Christianity has been feminized, softened; and the cause of this perversion is woman, for which reason also marriage must be rejected as incompatible with true Christianity, which in reality is total world abnegation, extreme suffering (for Christ's sake), and martyrdom.

The chief problem, according to Kierkegaard, that faces every person is *how actually to become a true Christian*, not merely how to get acquainted with Christianity as a doctrine or institution. Man is a sinner, and as such he is corrupt and in opposition to God. How, then, can man be so changed that he finds himself in real agreement with God and, by God's strength, walks God's way and not his own? This total change takes place only through the "miracle of faith," that is, man's deliberate decision by which he enters into that relation with God which renders him absolutely obedient to Him.

For the ordinary Christian, who is not inclined to meditate on religious problems, the way of becoming a Christian (according to Kierkegaard) is one of simple, honest obedience and effort to realize in his life the Christianity of the New Testament, at the same time honestly admitting his insufficiency, but also believing that divine grace will avail for his deficiency and imperfection. For the more alert person, however, who faces his religious problems with intelligence and full awareness of their implications, the way is much more difficult; for he is inclined to explore other possibilities of life, without, however, finding satisfaction in fol-

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<sup>38</sup> Kierkegaard's *Journals* do not only make delightful reading, but also throw much valuable light on his inward problems, his deep-going religious experiences, and his frequently almost overwhelming soul struggles.



lowing his own way, while at the same time his "sickness unto death," or his "despair," his awful consciousness of his total separation from God, his inward anguish of sin, is constantly tormenting him. From this there is no other escape than by a bold faith leap into the confidence attitude to Christ by virtue of his personal decision.

There are thus three stages which a person may face: (1) The *esthetic existence*, the stage of enjoyment, be it ever so refined, the end of which is despair. (2) The *ethical existence*, in which one makes the universal norm of humanity, the norm of duty, the standard of his life. But again and again in this ethical existence man faces sin and, because of sin, guilt, and, because of guilt, condemnation. But the very question "Guilty or not guilty?" leads him to consider Christianity, which promises him salvation from the power of sin. (3) The *Christian, or faith, existence*, in which a person by virtue of his absolute dedication to Christ (and so to God) realizes in his life that Christianity of honest confession and of Christlike living which alone is Christianity. The problem for a person thus consists in gaining confidence in God despite his sin and guilt, and this is possible only through total consecration to Christ, or through faith in the absurd, namely, that Christ is God and man at the same time. Christ is the absolute Paradox, in whom reason absolutely must be offended. To become a Christian therefore means constantly to surrender one's rational thinking and to gain by faith a blessed life in communion with God.

Kierkegaard was well instructed by his father, and later at the university, in the doctrines of Lutheranism, and the fundamentals of his own religious system are built up upon basic teachings of Lutheranism. At the same time Kierkegaard's speculative religion is also a total departure from the Lutheran doctrine. In his religious works we find a morbid onesidedness, which is essentially foreign to Lutheranism. Lutheranism in its pure form indeed emphasizes the absolute holiness and righteousness of God, more even than did Kierkegaard. Likewise Lutheranism emphasizes the damnableness of sin, and that likewise more than did Kierkegaard. Again, Lutheranism emphasizes the necessity of faith—the *sola fide*—by far more than did Kierkegaard, and for the genuine Lutheran the *fides qua creditur*, saving, justifying faith, is not man's own decision, not man's own venture leap into a right attitude toward Christ, but the gift of the Holy Spirit. Lutheranism, moreover, emphasizes holiness of life as a most necessary fruit of faith, but it does not say with Kierkegaard that Christianity is essentially world abnegation, suffering, martyrdom, but rather: Christianity as a new faith life *shows itself* in all these

things; in other words, these are the fruits of true faith. Judged according to the norm of Lutheranism, Kierkegaard was not merely an extremist, but a departer: he left the safe ground of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions and lost himself in a religious philosophy which at last terminated in utter religious pessimism. The fact that Kierkegaard at last adjured the Christian people of Copenhagen not to attend church, that he refused to admit a representative pastor to his sickroom, that he declined Holy Communion administered to him by a pastor, that he did not wish the ministration of a minister at his burial—all this proves that a thorough break with the Church had occurred, and an absolute repudiation of organized Christianity. Kierkegaard, starting as a rationalizing philosopher, ended as a rationalizing religious fanatic. It has been said that Kierkegaard's Christianity was that of the Old Testament, not that of the New Testament; but this contrast is not justified. Kierkegaard's Christianity was of his own making, a Christianity of defeatism, an impossible Christianity just because it was a Christianity of pessimism. Certainly, the Christian following Christ and the Apostles is not "an isolated individual, alone with God, and in contact with the world only through suffering,"<sup>39</sup> but one of faith and fellowship with others,<sup>40</sup> one of deep and constant joyousness and kindness,<sup>41</sup> one of real appreciation of all gifts of God, temporal and spiritual,<sup>42</sup> in short, the very opposite of Kierkegaard's morbid, melancholy substitute for Christianity.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *The Concordia Cyclopedia*, sub Kierkegaard.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Acts 2:42-47.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Phil. 4:4 ff.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Cor. 3:21-23.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. the very helpful article "Soeren Kierkegaard" by Dean Gross, in *Monatsschrift fuer Pastoraltheologie*, Vol. 9, pp. 24 ff., which is perhaps the finest introductory article to Kierkegaard which this writer has ever read. Dean Gross admits Kierkegaard's vanity and psychoneurotic tendency, his onesidedness and exaggeration, but also points out his deep seriousness in telling his contemporaries that a formal Christianity is no Christianity at all, for which reason he had a definite mission in his time and still has a mission today. To this we agree; but, with *The Presbyterian*, we must say that we cannot agree to receive Kierkegaard as a guide, for when he theologizes, he teaches commandments of men, not the Word of God. This does not mean that we recognize no value in his work; but it does mean that we do not value his work when it goes beyond Scripture and purposes to burden us with a Christianity that does not take cognizance of the principle of Christian liberty, which St. Paul so strenuously defends in his Epistle to the Galatians. It speaks well for Karl Barth that gradually he has moved away from Kierkegaard and is building up his *Dogmatik* along the lines of the traditional *Kirchenlehre*. We do not believe that Barth in his *Dogmatik* represents the orthodox Christian faith, but there certainly is between him and Kierkegaard a great gulf. Kierkegaard merely offers certain emphases, while Barth again endeavors to present a more or less complete system of doctrine.

## V

It is true, Kierkegaard was greatly offended at the paganism of his age and, we must add, at the worldliness that had entered into the Danish State Church, at the formality of religion, the lip service, the externalism both of the clergy and laymen of his day. He indeed had reason to raise his voice against the rationalism which from Germany had entered into the ecclesiastical circles of his country, against the sham and pretense prevalent about him. But it must not be forgotten that there were men in Denmark, too, who were leading back the masses to the fundamentals of Christianity, and that in a quiet, normal, Scriptural way.

There was, for example, Bishop Mynster, whom despite his criticism Kierkegaard personally esteemed and whose services he diligently attended as long as he lived. Bishop Mynster may not have been without fault. But Bishop Martensen was not wrong when in the eulogy of his predecessor he praised Mynster as a witness to the truth. He was that indeed. While crass rationalism generally prevailed in ecclesiastical circles, the pious common people held to their Bible and Catechism, their ancient sermon postils and books of devotions, and it was to this pious, simple Christian folk that Mynster, eloquent, impressive, and devout as he was, largely ministered. Meusel, in his *Kirchliches Handlexikon*,<sup>44</sup> says of him: "Sein Leben lang hat er wie eine feste Mauer gegen den Ansturm des Liberalismus dagestanden." Kierkegaard's *Journals* show that Bishop Mynster, though frequently tormented by Kierkegaard's visits, personally treated him with the greatest consideration. No doubt Bishop Martensen was right when he said of Mynster: "Er gehoert in unserm Vaterlande zu denen, die nicht vergessen werden koennen; denn er ist fuer viele das Beste gewesen, was ein Mensch fuer andere sein kann, naemlich der Weg zum Wege."<sup>45</sup>

Kierkegaard's final onslaught upon the Church, his ecclesiastical denunciatory period, as Dr. Hult calls it, began when Bishop Martensen, Mynster's successor, praised his predecessor as a witness to the truth. Kierkegaard had no liking for Bishop Martensen, and perhaps this personal dislike for the man had much to do with his violent attack upon him. But Dr. Hans Lassen Martensen had come a long way from Hegel and Schleiermacher, from Tauler and Jakob Boehme, until on February 3, 1884, he, on his deathbed, made this confession: "Nichts ist mir gewisser als der auferstandene, gen Himmel gefahrene Christus und sein himmlisches Reich." In Martensen's *Dogmatik* and *Ethik* Lutheranism does not

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *sub* Jakob Peter Mynster.

<sup>45</sup> Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, *sub* Mynster.

appear in an unadulterated form. They show very much the influence of Hegelian pantheism and of mysticism. Nevertheless both Mynster and Martensen did far more for the Christianizing of the Danish people by their quiet, sane, Scriptural approach than Kierkegaard did by his use of philosophic speculation, ironic ridicule, and vehement fanaticism.

In his *Journals* Soeren Kierkegaard exhibits a cordial contempt for Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, Danish bishop, poet, and hymn writer. He writes of him, for example: "Grundtvig's preaching is nothing but a constantly reiterated wandering of the imagination, such that no legs can ever keep up with it; it is a weekly evacuation."<sup>46</sup> It must indeed be admitted that Grundtvig erred in many ways and on many points. He regarded, for example, the Apostles' Creed as coming directly from the very mouth of Christ and as being His *viva vox*, which deserves a place far above Scripture itself. His enthusiasm did not permit him to accept the historic Christian doctrine regarding the value and place of Scripture as an authority in doctrine and life. He also attacked the prevailing Church and its clergy; but despite all these faults Grundtvig's main attack was upon the prevalent rationalism of his day, and his witness for the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, and other fundamentals was quite definite. In the light in which he saw the truth, he labored diligently and faithfully to gather God's elect into Christ's fold and to establish them in the faith and secure them against the sham of rationalism and formalism. Meusel says of him, in his *Kirchliches Handlexikon*: "Grundtvig hat mit warmem Herzensglauben den in der Gemeinde lebendigen Herrn als ein treuer Zeuge bekannt und ist fuer Unzaehlige im Norden ein Fuehrer zu ihm geworden."<sup>47</sup> By the way, Bishop Peter Kierkegaard, the elder brother of Soeren Kierkegaard, was a follower of Grundtvig, who is known as the "Prophet of the North," and whose funeral in Copenhagen, in September, 1872, was among the most imposing ever accorded to a church leader.

Let no one, then, think that the Lutheran Church in Denmark was so entirely corrupted that there was absolutely no spiritual life in it and that there were no believing leaders to direct the searching people to Christ. There were God's "seven thousand" also in the State Church of Denmark, and there was sincere and pure Gospel preaching, and it is quite generally conceded that wherever the Word of God was proclaimed in its truth, the churches

<sup>46</sup> Dru: *Journals*, p. 80, par. 313; cf. also other expressions in the *Journals* none too favorable to Grundtvig.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, sub. Grundtvig.

were filled. Kierkegaard therefore was wrong in seeing nothing but formalism and in not recognizing that while there is the broad way which attracts the majority, there is still the narrow way upon which walk the poor in spirit, the Lord's elect saints, whose profession of the faith is never a lip service. Kierkegaard never in his writings shows a clear understanding of the true evangelical faith; both in spirit and in doctrine he differs from Lutheran and traditional Christianity.

## VI

Kierkegaard, it seems, could never appreciate Luther and his evangelical viewpoint. He writes of the great Reformer: "Surely it was a misunderstanding on Luther's part when he thought that the devil was hard upon him. It seems to me that, on the contrary, Satan must have been well pleased with Luther for having produced a confusion which is not so easily put right, because it requires a noble and honest man, and honest, noble men are, as we all know, few and far between."<sup>48</sup> Again: "The closer I examine Luther, the more convinced do I become that he was muddle-headed. It is a comfortable kind of reforming which consists in throwing off burdens and making life easier—that is an easy way of getting one's friends to help. True reforming always means to make life more difficult, to lay on burdens; and the true reformer is therefore always put to death as though he were the enemy of mankind."<sup>49</sup> Or: "I often think, when I look at Luther, that there is one very doubtful thing about him: a reformer who wanted to cast off the yoke—is a very doubtful matter. . . . That is why Luther had such an easy fight. The difficulty lies precisely in suffering, because one must make things more difficult for others. When one fights to throw off burdens, one is of course understood by very many whose interest it is to throw off the burdens. And consequently the real Christian sign, double danger, is absent. In a sense Luther took the matter too lightly. He ought to have made it apparent that the freedom he was fighting for (and in that fight he was on the right side) led to making life, the spiritual life, infinitely more exhausting than it had been before. If he had kept strictly to that, then practically no one would have remained with him, and he would have reached the sphere of double danger; for no one follows one in order to have their lives made stricter."<sup>50</sup>

Why this criticism of Luther? Because Kierkegaard never came to a clear knowledge of the basic difference between Law

<sup>48</sup> Dru: *Journals*, p. 501, par. 1316.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298, par. 889.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284, par. 1079.



and Gospel, but consistently mingled Law and Gospel. Ultimately Kierkegaard's entire teaching was Law. Christianity to him was not essentially trust in Christ and the blessed rejoicing which flows from reliance on Christ, but asceticism, self-imposed suffering, work righteousness. Even Kierkegaard's best works are far removed from the spirit of the Gospel, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of spiritual joy which is the gift of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of true believers. Not all that Kierkegaard regarded as such was externalism: in his condemnation he made no distinction between true believers and nominal church members, and that because he never understood the joyousness of faith and the sweetness of Christian liberty which is in Christ Jesus. Kierkegaard certainly never understood 1 Cor. 3:21-23. So he is not a safe guide of the Christian Church of today. His theology is not rooted in Scripture and the Christian creeds, but in a new norm of Christianity which basically is rationalistic and therefore anti-Christian. He did not preach Law and Gospel, sin and grace, justification and sanctification, Christian good works and Christian liberty, as these are set forth in God's Word and the Lutheran Confession, but he taught a rationalistic enthusiasm which one-sidedly, and even wrongly so, emphasized sin without pointing out to his readers how they might become free from sin. He preached rightly neither the Law nor the Gospel, but pictured to his contemporaries a Christianity which is not that of the Gospels, or of free grace.

In concluding his polemic against the "heavenly prophets," Luther warns his readers against these false teachers for two reasons. Of the second he says: "The other [reason] is that these prophets avoid, flee, and are silent with regard to the chief part of the Christian doctrine; for they nowhere teach how we may become free from sin, obtain a good conscience, and secure a peaceful, happy heart in relation to God. This is the true sign that their [guiding] spirit is the devil, who indeed arouses, terrifies, and confuses the consciences with strange words, but does not lead them to quietness and peace. Nor can he do it, but he goes about and inculcates certain strange works with which they should exercise and torment themselves. But they do not know anything about how a good conscience is secured and constituted, for they have never felt nor known this." As one studies Kierkegaard's religious works, and even the best of them, these words of Luther seem to characterize his chief fault: not knowing the Gospel himself, he did not know the art of teaching how sinners "may become free from sin, obtain a good conscience, and secure a peaceful, happy heart in relation to God." Our slogan therefore dare not be: "Back to Kierkegaard!" But it must be: "Back to Scripture! Back to Christ!" And the Lutheran believer, who



goes back to Scripture, cannot do otherwise than go back to Luther, whose every theological thought was rooted in, and drawn from, Holy Scripture, in particular the Gospel of Christ. This explains his Christian joyousness and his triumphant assurance of salvation; and this too marks the great difference between Luther and Kierkegaard.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

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### Some Remarks on the Question of the Salvation of the Heathen

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"In order to save universal grace before the forum of the human understanding, some have thought that the Gentiles will be saved for Christ's sake, without faith in the Gospel, on account of their moral aspirations (thus, for example, Hofmann). Others have assumed that after this life an opportunity to hear the Gospel and to believe will be offered (Martensen, Kliefoth, etc.). But these are human speculations, without any basis in Scripture" (Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, II, p. 35). Millions of men have died who never in their life heard the Gospel of Christ, their Savior. Shall we say that they are eternally lost? What, then, becomes of the universality of God's grace? This forms, says the *Lange-Schaff Commentary*, "one of the most bewildering subjects in religion" (on 1 Pet. 3:19 f.). "Christians of all times have been concerned over the fate of those who in this life have never heard the name of Christ." Thus Dr. C. M. Jacobs in *The Faith of the Church*, p. 61. Is there no hope for them? Then what becomes of the universality of God's grace in Christ? "The universality of Christ," says Jacobs (p. 59), "has always been a hard fact for men to grasp and hold."

Is there no way to solve this difficulty, no way to harmonize the truth of universal grace with the fact that many die who never heard the Gospel of grace? Human reason suggests various ways. Some have set up the monstrous thesis that such men may be saved through their moral endeavors. It is not surprising that the theology of Rome operates with this thesis. The Christian, too, is saved through his good works, says Rome. It was, therefore, good Romish theology when Andradius, the defender of the Council of Trent, declared that it is not only Scripture but also man's natural knowledge of God which engenders saving faith, and when, before him, Erasmus, the defender of the Pope, declared that Cicero and other virtuous Gentiles "lead a quiet life above" (*Baier-Walther*, II, p. 10). Speaking for Rome, W. E. Orchard declares: "That the heathen can be saved, without ever having heard of Christ at all, is fortunately a doctrine tenaciously held by the

Catholic Church" (*Foundations of Faith*, IV, p. 125). And these heathen are saved by following the light of nature and leading a good and upright life. Cardinal Manning declared: "God is infinite in His mercy to those who have never heard the words or the name of Jesus Christ. . . . The infinite merits of the Redeemer are before the mercy-seat of our heavenly Father for the salvation of those who follow even the little light which in the order of nature they receive" (*The Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost*, p. 6. See E. H. Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison*, pp. 420, 183). Father Richard Felix, in the pamphlet "Why?": "If a man belongs to a religion which in truth is false but which he sincerely believes to be true and if he does what he deems to be the will of God, he will probably be saved in spite of the fact that he follows a false religion. Such a one belongs to the soul of the true Church without knowing it." This monstrous dogma has been tenaciously held by the Catholic Church. Its head, Pius IX, declared in his Encyclical of August 10, 1863: "We and you know that those who lie under invincible ignorance as regards our most Holy Religion, and who, diligently observing the natural law and its precepts, which are engraven by God on the hearts of all, and prepared to obey God, *lead a good and upright life* [our italics], are able by the operation of the power of divine light and grace, to obtain eternal life."

Nor is it surprising that the liberal Protestants teach that the heathen can save themselves, with the help of God. The Liberals are blood brothers of the Catholics, of the race of Pelagius. The Unitarians, for instance, hold that "all truth is God's truth, whether of pagan or Christian origin," that "Christian or pagan, theist or atheist, may follow truth to the uttermost bounds and speak the truth as he finds it—and is responsible only to his own conscience," and that the idolatrous devotion of the savage, flowing from a sincere impulse, is a quest after the infinite good—leading to eternal salvation. (See *Popular Symbolics*, pp. 401 ff.) The liberal Protestants are following the lead of Zwingli, who was sure that Socrates, Aristides, Cato, and other "pious and wise heathen" had entered heaven with David, Paul, and Peter. (See Luther, XX:1767, quoting from Zwingli's treatise *Christianae Fidei Expositio, ad Christianum Regem* etc.) "Zwingli recognized the good works of the heathen as done by the grace of God, and therefore acceptable to Him, and attesting the salvation of the worker. He saw in them—Socrates, Brutus, and others—those whom God had predestined to eternal life. 'Nothing,' he says, 'hinders but that God may choose among the heathen those who shall observe His laws and cleave to Him, for His election is free' (Zwingli, *Op. II*, p. 371)." (Plumptre, *op. cit.*, p. 168.) In line with Zwingli

and the Unitarians Swedenborg says: "I have been taught that the heathen who have led a moral life and have lived in obedience and subordination and mutual charity in accordance with their religion are accepted in the other life" (*Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell*, par. 321). Thus also the Quakers and others. (See *Popular Symbolics*.) James D. Smart: "A consideration which has weighed heavily upon men's minds in recent years is the destruction in eternity of those countless millions who have lived and died in ignorance of the Gospel. . . . What about the earnest, thoughtful, God-fearing man of a non-Christian religion, a man who perhaps puts many Christians to shame with his virtues? Are we to say that such men lose the chance of heaven because they do not happen to have had their lifestream directed into Christian channels? . . . Judgment belongs to God, and we can surely trust His mercy and His justice and His wisdom more than we would trust our own. The man who asserts that God cannot say to a Buddhist or a Confucianist, or even for that matter to a professing atheist, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant,' denies to God the freedom which is His. He can save whom He will" (*What a Man Can Believe*, pp. 242 ff.). The *Christian Advocate* wrote some years ago: "Question: What does the Methodist Episcopal Church hold concerning the fate of the heathen who never heard of Christ? Answer: It holds, what it finds in the Scriptures, that the Spirit of God strives with all men; that simplicity and purity of intention are compatible with great ignorance, even of some important moral distinctions; and that those heathen who live in harmony with the light they receive as nearly as Christians are required to live in harmony with the light that they receive, will be saved. All other heathen who are responsible and have resisted the influence of the Spirit and have not lived in harmony with the light they have received, it holds are condemned."

That is the voice of Pelagius. And echoes of his voice are heard even in — the Lutheran Church. Hofmann taught that the heathen may gain eternal life in virtue of their God-pleasing conduct, flowing from their natural knowledge of God (*Schriftbeweis*, I, p. 568 f.). And Milton Valentine declared that "if the heathen lived according to the light afforded them," they are saved (*Christian Theology*, II, p. 405 f. See Pieper, *op. cit.*, I, p. 223).

This Pelagian error appears in a subtle form in the teaching that while the natural goodness of a heathen does not save him, it prepares and fits him for receiving the Gospel preached to him in Hades. W. A. Wexels (Lutheran): "I am inclined to believe that also many heathen, by their earnest seeking after the truth, by their humble striving after righteousness, have in this manner

been prepared to accept, after death, the Gospel of Christ." (See *Theological Quarterly*, 1908, p. 26.) W. Ziethe: "The preaching of Christ in Hades was a preaching of repentance and salvation also for all those who through no fault of their own never heard of Him here on earth. . . . We are here thinking of those many noble souls in heathendom who had served the unknown God according to their light and ability. Now they, too, behold the salvation of our Lord" (*Das Lamm Gottes*, p. 728 f.). Jacobs: "Christians of all times have been concerned over the fate of those who in this life have never heard the name of Christ. Are they to spend eternity in the outer darkness? Are the purest and noblest of those who lived before the time of Jesus to be excluded from the blessing of eternal life? . . . Christ descended into Hades, the place of the departed, that He might be their Savior too. . . . And may we not also reverently hope, as Justin Martyr did, that His Lordship may have brought a blessing to those outside the line of Israel, to the 'other sheep, who are not of this fold' (John X:16), to Socrates and Plato, and all who have lived pure lives and thought high thoughts, and striven for great and distant goals? That is the hope that lingers in my own mind when we confess this universal Christ, who was not only 'crucified, dead, and buried,' but 'descended into hell'" (*op. cit.*, p. 61 f.). J. Paterson-Smyth: "If the heathen Socrates, and Plato, and Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus would have fallen at His feet as their Master and Friend—and you know they would—do you think they have not learned to know Him by now, through our Lord's mysterious preaching in the Life after Death?" (*The Gospel of the Hereafter*, p. 150 f.) Kliefoth puts it thus: "Among the heathen who have not heard the Gospel there are some who attend to God's revelation in nature and the conscience and thus strive to suppress the sinful promptings of their Adamic nature; they thereby reach such a condition that they would not reject the salvation, if it were offered them, and are ready for repentance and faith. . . . By heeding the truths of natural religion they are led *ad januam ecclesiae*, so that they, thus prepared, might yet receive in Hades the knowledge of salvation. They have not been called through the Gospel in this life, yet their life on earth produced fruit unto life." *Lehre und Wehre* comments: "That is the familiar Pelagianistic conception of sin which we invariably meet in the writings of the modern 'Lutherans'" (1888, p. 67). There is no essential difference between saying with Pelagius that fallen man retains all his powers for good and saying that he retains some powers for good; no essential difference between the teaching that man can with some little help from God achieve his own salvation, and the teaching that the earnest striving and

virtuous aspirations of the heathen will subserve their eternal salvation.

The teaching that heathen are saved, wholly or in part, through their morality has no place in the Christian Church. It is a heathen doctrine; for the essence of all heathen religions is the idea of salvation through works. Scripture repudiates all such ideas. Scripture teaches most emphatically that "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:11,12). The "morality" of the heathen is a fiction. Scripture, again, teaches that there is no salvation except through Jesus and the means of grace. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). And Scripture plainly states that the Gentiles, as long as they remain Gentiles, "have no hope" (Eph. 2:12). The teaching that men are saved or contribute towards their salvation through their good works and noble aspirations is a denial of Christianity; it denies the *sola gratia*.

Luther: "Zwingli has recently declared that Numa Pompilius, Hector, Scipio, and Hercules will enjoy the eternal bliss in Paradise with Peter and Paul and the other saints. He thereby publicly declares that faith and Christianity mean nothing. For if Scipio and Numa Pompilius, who were idolaters, have been saved, what need was there for Christ to suffer and die? Or why should it be necessary that the Christian should be baptized or that Christ be preached and men directed to go to Him? . . . The Enthusiasts know nothing of the Christian faith and teach and believe exactly what has been taught in popedom, viz.: If a man does what lies in his power, he will thereby be saved" (II:1828). Luther again: "Tell me, you who are a Christian, what need is there of Baptism, the Sacrament, Christ, the Gospel, the Prophets, and Holy Scripture if such wicked heathen, Socrates, Aristides . . . Scipio, the Epicurean, are holy and blessed, are with the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and Apostles in heaven, though they knew nothing of God, Scripture, Gospel, Christ, Baptism, Sacrament, or of the Christian faith? Was kann ein solcher Schreiber, Prediger und Lehrer anders glauben von dem christlichen Glauben, denn dass er sei allerlei Glauben gleich, und koenne ein jeglicher in seinem Glauben selig werden, auch ein Abgoettischer und Epicurer, als Numa und Scipio? . . . Zwingli ist in diesem Buechlein gar zum Heiden worden" (XV:1767). Luther again: "I say that the



heathen cannot be saved in any other way than through the Word of Christ" (II:1830). Once more: "All outside Christianity, whether heathen, Turks, Jews . . . know not what His mind towards them is and cannot expect any love or blessing from Him; therefore they abide in eternal wrath and damnation" (The Large Catechism; *Trigl.*, p. 697). And in the famous letter to Hans von Rechenberg, Luther, in answer to the question: "Ob auch die, so ohne Glauben sterben, Gott moege oder werde selig machen?" says among other things: "And now as to our answer: we have strong passages which declare that God will not and cannot save anyone except through faith. He says Mark 16:16: 'Wer nicht glaubt, der wird verloren': *item*, Hebr. 11:6: 'Without faith it is impossible to please God'; *item*, John 3:6: 'He that is not born again of the Spirit and water, cannot see the Kingdom of God'; *item*, John 3:18: 'He that believeth not is condemned already'" (X:2004).<sup>1</sup> "Kein Heide kann auf andere Weise selig werden;

<sup>1</sup> "Zwingli und die Humanisten sprachen Heiden auf Grund ihrer Weisheit und Tugend, ohne Glauben an Christum, die Seligkeit zu. Sogar auch ueber Luther ging das Geruecht, dass er in diesem Stueck Zwinglis Lehre billige" (Pieper in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1921, p. 354). Luther protested against these insinuations in the words quoted above, II:1828. He shows, on p. 1829, that the rumor is based on a misrepresentation of the statement of his that some of the descendants of Cain were saved. "Yes, surely I said that; but they were saved not as Cainites, but on being incorporated in the congregation of the saints. . . . Zwingli's doctrine, imputed to me, is a most dangerous error, which I can in no way praise or defend." The rumor that Luther was a Zwinglian on this point is still rife. We read in Walter Holsten, *Christentum und nicht-christliche Religion nach der Auffassung Luthers*, p. 98 (1932): "Ganz ueberraschend aber kommt es uns vor, wenn Luther dann wiederholt der Hoffnung Ausdruck gibt, Gott werde dem Cicero angesichts so grosser Verdienste auch ohne die Vermittlung des geordneten Amts der Suendenvergebung durch Glauben auf ausserordentlichem Wege die Seligkeit schenken." Did Luther ever express such a hope? Well, we read in *Tischreden*, XXII:1563: "Danach erwaehte er (Luther) den Cicero, den besten, weisesten und fleissigsten Mann, wie viel er gelitten und getan habe. Ich hoffe, sprach er, unser Herrgott wird ihm und seinesgleichen auch gnaedig sein, obgleich es uns nicht zukommt, das zu sagen und zu bestimmen, sondern [wir] sollen bei dem Geoffenbarten bleiben: 'Wer da glaubt und getauft wird' u. s. w. (Marc. 16:16.) Dass aber Gott nicht bei anderen nachlassen koenne und einen Unterschied machen unter andern Voelkern, davon gebuehrt uns hier nicht Zeit und Weise zu wissen." When somebody attempted to substantiate the rumor that Luther had adopted Zwingli's view and quoted the above passage, Walther reminded him of what Gerhard told Paraeus and other Reformed theologians who had quoted the Tischreden passage for the same purpose. "I answer: What Luther thought about this view of Zwingli, all men know. In his treatise *Kurzes Bekenntnis* he declares that Zwingli's opinion is a heathen opinion—"Zwingli ist in diesem Buechlein gar zum Heiden worden" (Luther XX:1767). Gerhard also quotes the passage II:1828 and concludes with the statement: "These words of Luther constitute a sharp reply to Paraeus, Pelargus, and the Berlin Collocutors, who make the ridiculous statement that Luther shared Zwingli's view. But everybody knows that Luther never saw



denn wer den Sohn nicht hat, der hat auch den Vater nicht. Wurden die Heiden ohne das Evangelium selig werden koennen, wozu wollte man dann noch Mission treiben? Wenn es wahr ist, dass die Heiden auch ohne Christum selig werden, wozu ist Christus alsdann in die Welt gekommen? Wer da meint, dass auch die Heiden wurden selig werden, wenn sie nur ein frommes Leben fuehren, ohne an Christum zu glauben, der glaubt selbst nicht von Herzen an Christum" (*Proceedings Northern District*, 1876, p. 29). It follows, says Dr. Pieper, that "no Christian teacher dare arouse hopes of a conversion after death, much less teach that heathen are saved on the basis of the *justitia naturalis et civilis*" (Chr. Dogm. III, p. 624. See also I, p. 450, II, p. 477).<sup>2</sup>

nor endorsed the *Tischreden*." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1873, pp. 115 ff.) — Walther calls attention to the following statement of Luther: "The scholastics taught that if a man does what lies in his power God certainly bestows His grace on him. Now Cicero did what lay in his power; however, he did not obtain God's grace; in applying his own power he sank into still greater darkness and even doubted that there is a God" (I:815). (See also IV:1951.) In 1884 Dr. Stoeckhardt gave a similar answer to another rumor-monger: "Im Uebrigen darf man nicht vergessen, dass die *Tischreden* Luthers Apokryphen sind. Verbuergt dagegen ist Luthers Urtheil ueber Zwingli, welcher Hercules, Socrates, Cato, Scipio und andere Heiden neben Propheten und Apostel in den Himmel versetzte, dass Zwingli eben damit selbst zum Heiden geworden und vom christlichen Glauben abgefallen sei (XX:1767)." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1884, p. 23.)

<sup>2</sup> We submit a few additional statements. R. Pieper: "Wenn daher neuere Theologen, aehnlich wie einst Zwingli, behaupten, dass auch ausser Christo und seiner Kirche Heil sei, wenn z. B. Heubner schreibt: 'Den engen Partikularismus, als wenn es ausser dem Christentum keine Besserung und also auch keine Seligkeit statuieren, darf man also dem Christentum nicht andichten' (*Topik*, S. 281), so ist das ein wissenschaftliches Fuendlein, welches sie dem Christentum andichten. Das Christentum der Schrift ist durchaus exclusiv, es kennt nur eine Seligkeit in Christo, und nur eine Verdammnis ohne Christum, denn Apostg. 4:12 heisst es: 'Es ist in keinem andern Heil etc.'." (*Der Kleine Katechismus Luthers erklart*, II, p. 98.) *Harless' Commentary*, on Eph. 2:12: "Die Willkuehr, mit der man gleich einem Abaelard, Zwingli, Bucer, Bullinger, u. a. Ausnahmen einzelner statuirt, wonach solche nicht etwa relative weniger an jenem allgemeinen Unheil heidnischer Gottentfremdung krankten, sondern specifisch verschieden von dem Wesen heidnischer Entwicklung waren, quos, wie sich Bucer ausdrueckt, *Deus Christi sui fide et expectatione per spiritum suum donavit*, gehoert zu den *Traeuemen*, die man nicht zu widerlegen braucht, so lange der Beweis dafuer nicht auf *historischem* Wege hergestellt worden ist." Lenski, on Rom. 1:20: "Some insert a reduced condition: 'in order that, if men fail to use what they see, they may be without defense.' The object in this reduction is to make the *revelatio divina naturalis*, the natural *cognitio Dei*, a means of grace, the right use of which would save those who make this use. The idea is widely held — salvation by faith in God and a moral life, without Christ and His atonement for sin. Heaven is opened to noble pagans. This is fiction, and Paul is guilty of no condition in this clause." C. Hodge: "All men being sinners, justly charged with inexcusable impiety and immorality, they cannot be saved by any effort or resource of their own. 1 Cor. 6:9. Eph. 5:5. Heb. 12:14.

Christians of all times have been concerned over the fate of those who never heard the name of Christ. But the theory proposed by Zwingli and other rationalists—that God, who would have all men to be saved, saves these men through their good works—does not solve or ease the difficulty. The Christian consciousness cannot accept this solution. It refuses to save the universality of grace by sacrificing the *sola gratia*, the grace of God in Christ.

Then there are those who reject Zwingli's expedient, who abhor the doctrine of salvation through works and declare with Luther that the heathen cannot be saved in any other way than through the Word of Christ, that God will not save anyone except through faith,<sup>3</sup> but who, in order to harmonize universal grace with the fact that many die without having heard the Gospel, choose to teach that to such the saving Gospel is preached in Hades.

We have treated this matter in the three preceding articles on the Hades gospel. We have examined the teaching that there are two classes of men who are entitled to a second probation—(1) those who "died without a Gospel" and (2) those "to whom the offer of salvation has not been fully and adequately presented in this life." (See May issue, pp. 295 ff.) The case of the men of this second class presents no great difficulty. They did hear the

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John 3:3. 1 John 4:8. . . . The Wesleyan Arminians and the Friends, admitting the insufficiency of the light of nature, held that God gives sufficient grace or an inward supernatural light, which, if properly cherished and followed, will lead men to salvation. But this is merely an amiable hypothesis" (*Systematic Theology*, I, pp. 29, 31). And in his *Commentary on Romans* Hodge says: "Though the revelation of God in His works is sufficient to render men inexcusable, it does not follow that it is sufficient to lead men, blinded by sin, to a saving knowledge of Himself" (on Rom. 1:20). Stoeckhardt: "Es ist grundverkehrt, wenn neuere Theologen die *revelatio divina naturalis* und die *notitia Dei naturalis* als eine Art Gnadenmittel darstellen, welches wenigstens etliche Menschen zu Gott oder Gott naeher bringe. Das widerspricht dem hier vom Apostel angegebenen Zweck der natuerlichen Gottesoffenbarung" (on Rom. 1:20).

<sup>3</sup> H. M. Luckock, for instance, says: "However much the feeling of charity may dispose us to accept the plausible and attractive principle that God will judge the heathen according to his conscientious fulfillment of his own laws, whatever their nature, there are insurmountable objections to it. It is distinctly condemned moreover by our Confessions of Faith. The 18th of the Thirty-nine Articles teaches decisively that obedience to the natural conscience cannot possibly entitle a man to salvation, yea, it rejects the idea so strongly as to affix an anathema upon those who venture to suggest it. 'They also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved' (*The Intermediate State*, p. 176).

Gospel before their death.<sup>4</sup> But the case of those who never heard and never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel presents a serious difficulty. For that reason some additional remarks seem to be in place.

The Hades theologians solve the difficulty by having God preach the Gospel to the heathen in Hades. Luckock: "The general statement that man will be judged according to what he has done in the flesh must admit of exceptions; unless at least we would impugn the justice of God. The heathen may fairly be considered as legitimately exempted from the rule. . . . It is not a little remarkable how little is said about the heathen in the Bible. We conclude therefore that there will be some other sphere of probation for the heathen than that in the body in this present world. . . . We shall find, we believe, the only solution to these perplexing difficulties through the vast possibilities of the Intermediate State" (*op. cit.*, p. 182 f.). S. Baring-Gould: "God is just, and would it be just that hundreds of millions should be lost because they never had the chance?" (*The Restitution of All Things*, p. 40.) Rudelbach: "We dare not simply reject as groundless the prophetic hope that in an extraordinary way God's grace will be brought to those who in this life did not hear the Word of Life. Were not the dead evangelized at Christ's descent to Hades? . . . The light of the divine mercy and the light of truth go together." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1859, p. 43.) Martensen: "The Lord's descent into the kingdom of the dead expresses the idea of the universal and cosmic efficacy of Christ's work . . . the idea of the efficacy of the work of atonement for all who had died without the knowledge of salvation. . . . Conversion must still be possible for the unconverted in Hades" (*Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 316, 463). J. A. W. Haas in *The Lutheran* of April 27, 1933: "What is the meaning and value of this truth — 'He descended into hell' — for Christians of all times? . . . In it, I hold, there is a guarantee that Jesus is concerned for those who have had no opportunity to hear about Him in this life. Men have often asked the question: What would be the destiny of those who have lived before the time of Jesus? In the same manner, even today, the query is put whether those people to whom the Gospel has not been brought shall be held responsible. Christendom which fails to

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<sup>4</sup> This also applies to those who had the opportunity to hear the Gospel but neglected it. A correspondent writes: "If a man lives within a stone's throw of a Christian church and never considers it worth while to go and hear the Word of God, if a man lives for eighty or ninety years in a Christian land where he sees the work of the Church going on, where he experiences good and evil days, fortune and misfortune, and then dies in his sins and is eternally lost, would he have the right to accuse God of injustice?"

herald Christ, and to go into all the world, is responsible for not declaring the message to every creature. But the just God cannot and will not condemn those who have not heard about Jesus and His salvation. For them there will be some final opportunity to hear Christ and to see Him. They will be given a chance and an opportunity in the hereafter." O. Hallesby: "God does not permit a sinner to enter into eternal torment without first having met God face to face" (*Religious or Christian*, p. 161).—See the three preceding articles for additional statements.<sup>5</sup>

Now, what does Scripture say concerning those who die without faith, die in their sins? We have noted the statement that "it is not a little remarkable how little is said about the heathen in the Bible." We shall have to point out how much is said in the Bible about them, how emphatically the Bible pronounces the eternal doom against the unrepentant sinner. "The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. . . . Neither fornicators . . . nor thieves, nor covetous shall inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9f. Eph. 5:6). "More than this," as Hodge points out, "the Bible teaches us that a man may be outwardly righteous in the sight of men and yet be a whitened sepulcher, his heart being the seat of pride, envy, or malice. . . . And more even than this, although a man were free from outward sin and, were it possible, from the sins of the heart, this negative goodness would not suffice. Without holiness 'no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. 12:14" (*op. cit.*, p. 29). Then, there is Rom. 2:6-16: "As many as have sinned without Law shall also perish without Law." "God will judge Jews and Gentiles, all men, on the basis of the Law. The Gentiles too. For though the Gentiles do not have the revealed and written Law, the Law is written in their hearts; that is proved by the witness of the conscience. . . . Those that sin and do evil will be condemned and consigned to eternal wrath and destruction" (Stoeck-

<sup>5</sup> A similar expedient is employed when others say that the visible appearance of Christ for the final judgment will bring the last offer of salvation. Kaehler: "Christi Selbstdarstellung in der Parusie wird sie (die den Anteil an dem Versöhnungswerke Christi nicht aus sittlichen Gruenden versaeumt haben) erreichen und den 'ausgefallenen Anteil an der Geschichte ersetzen,' so dass die oben geforderte Beziehung wenigstens fuer jeden einmal hergestellt wird," meaning: At least once a chance to see Christ will be given to every man; men who did not have this opportunity in life will get it on the day of Judgment. (See W. Oelsner, *Die Entwicklung der Eschatologie*, p. 89.) J. C. Blumhardt: "There is no Scripture passage that men will obtain the forgiveness of sins after death if they did not have it before then, but we have Scriptural ground for holding that men may still obtain it on the Last Day" (*Biblische Erfahrung*, p. 58). *The Gospel of the Hereafter*, p. 163 e: "We are bound to believe that in the Final Judgment no man will be lost till the Father has, as it were, put His arms around him and looked him in the eyes with His unutterable love and been finally rejected."

hardt, *Commentary on Romans*, p. 101). Knowing nothing of Christ and left to bear the consequences of their sins, "they abide in eternal wrath and damnation" (The Large Catechism, *Trigl.*, page 697).

Scripture says further that God does not deal unjustly with the heathen in condemning them for their wickedness. When men declare that the heathen will escape damnation because of their ignorance of God and of His will, Scripture answers that the heathen are not ignorant of God and His holy Law. See Rom. 1:18 ff. "So that they are without excuse!" Stoeckhardt: "Men possess the truth . . . but they suppress it. Their wickedness and unrighteousness is not due to ignorance, but it is inexcusable wickedness; they sin against their own better knowledge and have only themselves to blame when the wrath of God strikes them. . . . On the day of Judgment they cannot plead that they did not know better" (*op. cit.*, pp. 51, 54). Hodge: "Paul does not teach here (Rom. 1:20) that it is the design of God, in revealing Himself to men, to render their opposition inexcusable, but rather, since this revelation is made, they have in fact no apology for their ignorance and neglect of God" (*Commentary on Romans*, 1:20).

Moreover, when men insist that the heathen were given no chance, Scripture tells them that God has revealed Himself to the heathen through nature, the innate knowledge of God, and His providence, in order that they might seek and find Him, and since the heathen refuse to follow these promptings, they are without excuse (Acts 17:27)! Romans 2:4: "not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." God puts forth serious efforts to prepare the heathen for the preaching of the Gospel and for true repentance—and they resist these efforts! Kretzmann's *Commentary on Acts 17:27*: "The purpose of God in thus manifesting His almighty power and providence is that men should seek the Lord. . . . It may be a groping as that of a blind man, and with all effort it would result in only partial recognition of the essence of God, but it would lead onward, and should then be supplemented by the knowledge of revelation." Lenski: "It is not God's will to remain unknown, He wants men to seek and find Him and to enter into communion with Him. All God's dealings with men show that this is His great purpose; God's creation of man and His providence place this beyond doubt" (on Acts 17:27). "'So that they are without excuse.' Men who suppress the manifest truth which God makes them see so clearly and fully, are without excuse. . . . No man is able to offer the excuse that he could not see, that it is God's fault and not his own that God is hidden from him" (on Romans 1:20). *Ev.-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt*, Febr. 13, 1944: "No man can be found throughout the wide earth



to whom God has not revealed Himself through His works, Rom. 1:19, 20, and through His Law, written in the heart of every man. All, without exception, hear God's voice. He has their salvation in mind. He would have them seek Him. . . . Whoever has died without faith has failed to receive this salvation because he despised the prevenient call of God, in His works and in His Law, and hardened himself against it." The heathen *do* have a chance, and, neglecting it, they are inexcusable.

But does not Scripture say, Luke 12:48: "But he that knew not and did not commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes"? Does that not prove that the heathen will receive another opportunity in Hades? The Hades theologians so apply this passage.<sup>6</sup> The text says nothing of the kind. It preaches the solemn truth that those who knew the Lord's will and had the Gospel light will receive more punishment *in hell* than those who knew less of God's will than they. But it also preaches the solemn truth that the men who, whatever the measure of their ignorance, did evil and died in their sins will suffer eternal damnation. Stoeckhardt: "Indessen tut die Schrift uns auch dies kund und zu wissen, dass der Zorn Gottes dereinst ueber alles gottlose Wesen und alle Ungerechtigkeit der Menschen offenbart werden wird, Roem. 1:18; dass jeder Knecht, welcher Uebel tut, Striche leiden wird, freilich aber der Knecht, der seines Herrn Willen nicht gewusst und nicht getan hat, weniger Streiche leiden wird als der Knecht, der seines Herrn Willen gewusst und doch nicht getan hat, Luk. 12:47 f." (On 1 Peter 3:13, 22; p. 177. See also Hodge, *op. cit.*, p. 27.) *The Pulpit Commentary* on Matt. 25: 31-46, p. 498: "The hard and selfish are those who receive the punishment. They will not escape it because of their *ignorance* or their refusal to recognize Christ. It will be unbearably awful."

Finally, where does Scripture state that since the grace of God is universal and the heathen did not hear the Gospel in this life, God will have it preached to them in Hades? Nowhere does Scripture state that. "The just God cannot and will not damn those who have not heard about Jesus. . . . They will be given a chance and an opportunity in the hereafter." Scripture does not say that. "God does not permit a sinner to enter into eternal torment without first having met God face to face." Scripture does not say that. "It is a sweet and comforting thought: Salvation comes in some way to every man, in life or in death" (*The Pulpit Commentary*, on 1 Peter 4:6, p. 178). Scripture does not say that. It does not say it in 1 Peter 3:19, 1 Peter 4:6, 1 John 3:8, Gen. 3:15, Matt. 5:26, Matt. 12:31 f., Matt. 11:20-24, John 12:2, Luke 16:25 ff.,

<sup>6</sup> See for instance, Plumptre, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 60, 163.

2 Peter 3:9 (see June issue, pp. 374 ff.) nor in Luke 12:48 (see above). What Scripture does say is: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16.<sup>7</sup> "Scripture declares that he that believeth not is condemned already; *item* everyone will receive according as he had believed and lived" (Luther, IX:1245). Scripture declares further that the day of salvation ends with this life and is not extended into Hades, Heb. 7:27, 2 Cor. 5:10, 2 Cor. 6:2. And so Scripture concludes: "The Gentiles have no hope," Eph. 2:12. What the text directly states is that as long as men live without the Gospel and without faith, they have no hope of salvation. But we certainly may add the thought that if St. Paul had been a Hades theologian, he could not have made such a strong statement. He should have added: Their condition is not absolutely hopeless; the Hades gospel casts a ray of hope over their miserable condition.

Scripture nowhere indicates that those who did not hear the Gospel on earth will hear it beyond the grave. Axel B. Svensson: "But of a mission to the dead or conversion after death Scripture says nothing. There is not a single text that teaches such a doctrine, provided the words are allowed to stand as they stand. If we are to read out of the Bible a doctrine of an opportunity for grace after death, we shall, on the one hand, have to twist and turn a number of texts, forcing them to yield a meaning that we have desired beforehand, and, on the other hand, we shall have to look away from many passages which clearly teach us that 'in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.' This may prove

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<sup>7</sup> The Hades theologians use this text to prove that one who has not heard the Gospel in this life must be given the opportunity to hear it after this life. Dorner: "It is not said that he that hears not shall be damned, but 'he that believes not,' Mark 16:16. Jesus seeks the lost; the lost are to be sought also in the kingdom of the dead. The opposite view leads to an absolute decree of rejection for all who have lived and died as heathen, whereas Christian grace is universal" (quoted in Plumptre, *op. cit.*, p. 253). Luckock: "No little misunderstanding has arisen from the erroneous translation of Mark 16:16. Our Lord did not say as the Authorized Version implies, 'he that believeth not shall be damned,' but, as it has been corrected in the Revised Version, 'he that disbelieveth shall be condemned,' which is something widely different" (*op. cit.*, p. 190). Th. Traub: "Scripture does not say that he who is ignorant of the Gospel will be judged but only he who rejects Christ and His word. . . . 'No one will be judged before Christianity has been made accessible and brought home to him' (Dorner)" (*Von den Letzten Dingen*, p. 92). Accept the translation "disbelieve" and what do you get? This, that one who hears the Gospel and rejects it will certainly be damned. But you cannot make that statement mean that one who never heard the Gospel here will hear it in Hades. "Nothing is said here of those who never hear the Gospel and thus never get to believe or disbelieve" (Lenski, on Mark 16:16). That case is treated in other passages of Scripture.

shocking, but — it is so." (Quoted in *Theological Monthly*, 1925, page 199.)

Pieper: "In order to save universal grace before the forum of human understanding, some have assumed that after this life an opportunity to hear the Gospel and to believe will be offered. But *these are human speculations*, without any basis in Scripture."

And this speculation is not an innocent matter. This fiction is based on wicked considerations. "It is an evil, abominable thing. 'In an effort to save God's honor and defend His justice and to make the gracious God still more gracious, men have made this statement: He preached the Gospel to those who had no opportunity of hearing it in their lifetime.' But this effort to save God's honor, this effort to save universal grace before the forum of carnal reason is virtually a condemnation of God as He has revealed Himself. Carnal reason assumes the right to sit in judgment on God." (See further September issue, pp. 605 ff.) And shall the Christian preacher, called to preach the Word of God, utter the sentiments of carnal reason?<sup>8</sup>

The Christian teacher must not arouse hopes of a conversion after death. He dare not proclaim it as a *fact*. Dare he speak of it as a *possibility*? Here Luther uses very cautious language. The question was put to him by Hans von Rechenberg: "ob auch die, so ohne Glauben sterben, Gott moege oder werde selig machen? Whether God may (can) or will save those who die without faith?" Luther first warns against giving way to reason and upbraiding God for damning so many. He then points out "that God will not and cannot save anyone except through faith" (see above), and then he says: "Das waere wohl eine andere Frage: Ob Gott etlichen im Sterben oder nach dem Sterben den Glauben koennte geben und also durch den Glauben koennte selig machen? Wer wollte daran zweifeln, dass er das tun koennte? Aber dass er's tue, kann man nicht beweisen." "That would be a question of a different nature whether God could give faith to some in death or after death and thus save them through faith? Who would doubt that God could do that? But that He does it cannot be proved" (X:2005). To be sure, God can preach the Gospel to those who did not hear it on earth. But Scripture nowhere in-

<sup>8</sup> We had Pieper's statement to that effect above. The full statement reads: "Scripture designates as inheritors of the eternal bliss those, and only those, who believe in Christ in this life. The description of God's love which embraces the whole world, John 3:16, is followed by the purpose clause: 'that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' But this refers to faith *in this life*. That is clear from v. 18: 'He that *believeth not* is condemned already.' Beyond that there is no revelation given in Scripture, and *no Christian teacher dare arouse hopes of a conversion after death*" (*op. cit.*, III, p. 623 f.).

dicates that He will or might do it. And if a person is going to preach it as a possibility, he will have to add that he is speaking without Scripture authority. — Those of us who do not believe in Hades as an Intermediate State but believe that the unbeliever is consigned to hell at his death, would have to teach that it is possible for God to revoke His final judgment.<sup>9</sup>

"Christians of all times have been concerned over the fate of those who in this life have never heard the name of Christ." And things being as they are, our greatest concern is to proclaim the name of Christ to as many of them as we can reach. (See Luther, IX:1086.) We are not to concern ourselves with the question why "God gives His Word at one place and not at another" (*Trigl.*, p. 1081). We do not know that. But we do know that God would have all men to be saved; we know, furthermore, that He has, for that purpose, given the Church the commission "to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15); and we know that God will hold us responsible for the perdition of those who did not hear the Gospel through our fault and negligence. Answering the question: "Will a heathen that has never been told, nor heard of Jesus be lost for eternity?" Prof. J. P. Milton says in *The Lutheran Companion* of May 14, 1932, and of March 7, 1931: "To this question I must say, I do not know. I can only surmise and guess," and then adds: "Our duty is plain: to preach the Gospel to every creature. If the burden of souls

<sup>9</sup> F. Mellows wrote recently: "'God forbid,' wrote Luther, 'that I should limit the time of acquiring faith to the present life. In the depths of divine mercy there may be opportunities to win it in the future state.'" (See September issue, p. 538.) Before him F. W. Farrar had written: "Even Luther, like almost every great and true-hearted teacher on this subject, while constantly maintaining the doctrine of endless torment in nearly its present form, yet slides unconsciously into more hopeful expressions; 'God forbid,' he says, 'that I should limit the time of acquiring faith to the present life! In the depths of the divine mercy there may be opportunity to win it in the future state.' Letter to Hans von Rechenberg, 1522. (Alger, *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 421.)" (*Eternal Hope*, p. 219. — Our italics.) Alger, Farrar's authority, quotes from the letter from which we quoted the words: "Das waere wohl eine andere Frage, etc." And these are the only words in the letter as it appears in the St. Louis Edition which have any bearing on the matter under discussion. It does not contain the words quoted by Farrar and Alger. The Erlangen Edition has the same wording as the St. Louis — Walch Edition. The Weimar Edition, too, has the very same words — does not contain the Alger-Farrar version. The Weimar Edition (Vol. X, 2, pp. 322 ff.) lists the variant readings in the different printings of the letter — all unimportant — but knows nothing of the Alger variant. And before we discuss the matter further, we would want to see the words quoted by Alger in their context, insisting, of course, on the force of Luther's statement as given in the Erlangen, St. Louis, and Weimar Editions: "But that He does it cannot be proved." — By the way, Luther maintains the doctrine of endless torment in the strongest terms in this very writing.

that have not heard about Jesus lies heavy on our heart, let it constrain us to do more that they might hear. I do not know more than this, that God 'would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,' 1 Tim. 2:4. . . . We have our marching orders. We know that Jesus saves. We know also that Jesus wants us to let all men know about His salvation; we know what peace and joy salvation brings in this life: For this we are responsible. . . ." Let us not take the matter lightly. It must deeply concern us. As Walther says in his great mission sermon, "Die Heidenmission, eine Christenschuld": "Though we cannot find fault with God for this, that so many millions have died and are dying today who never heard about their Savior . . . though the heathen are lost because of their sins: yet these heathen, deprived through the fault of the Christians of God's Word and left in utter cheerlessness, in utter hopelessness, appear before God as the accusers of the Christians, and the day is coming when God will require the blood of all these neglected souls at the hand of the Christians" (*Lutherische Brosamen*, p. 41; *Evangelien-Postille*, p. 54).<sup>10</sup> "Someone asked whether heathen could be saved without Christ's Gospel. A Christian answered: 'I am even more concerned about the other question, whether I can be saved if I disregard my Savior's will and make no effort to save others' (CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, 1944, p. 406). Apply that to the present case. Knowing that there is no hope for those who die without the Gospel, without faith, the thing that bothers us and gives us deep concern is the fact that we are derelict in our mission duty.

Do those men who hope that the Gospel will be preached to the heathen in Hades consider missionary work among the heathen unnecessary? Not necessarily. They are not asking the Church to disband the mission societies. They do not ignore Mark 16:15, but see in it an imperative obligation laid upon the Church. Luckcock: "We believe, then, that for those who have had no fitting opportunity of knowing God's will here on earth,

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<sup>10</sup> We quote further from this sermon: "Es ist nun zwar freilich wahr, dass trotz aller dieser Anstalten Gottes, auch allen Heiden sein seligmachendes Wort zu schenken, dennoch ungezaehlte Millionen Menschen durch die Schuld ihrer Voreltern des Wortes Gottes beraubt und in die Nacht heidnischer Unwissenheit und Unglaubens zurueckgesunken sind. . . . Gott wird einst aus den Haenden der Christen das Blut aller dieser von ihnen verwahrlosten Seelen fordern. . . . Wie? Koennen also Christen sagen, dass sie die Brueder lieben, wenn sie ruhig zusehen koennen, dass Millionen ihrer Brueder und Schwestern ohne Gott, ohne Licht, ohne Gnade, ohne Trost in Leiden, ohne Hoffnung im Tode, in Suenden, in Blindheit, in Gottes Zorn und Ungnade und in unaussprechlicher aeusserer und innerer Not dahingehen, endlich in Verzweiflung dahinfahren, das Licht nimmermehr sehen und so nach Leib und Seele immer und ewig verloren gehen? Nimmermehr! . . ."



the truth will be revealed in the Intermediate State. . . . Such a suggestion will at once start some serious objections. If this be so, is it not better to leave the heathen as ignorant as they are, and trust to their being reclaimed hereafter? If we had no revelation of God's will concerning them, we could draw no other conclusion; but there is an imperative obligation laid upon the Church on earth to 'preach the Gospel to every creature,' and to dare to withhold it on these or any other imaginable grounds of man's conception would be an act of culpable neglect. What God has bidden must be best, though with our finite faculties we cannot see it" (*op. cit.*, p. 192).<sup>11</sup> The Hades theologians do inculcate the mission duty, and as a result many heathen are saved from eternal damnation. They operate with the command of Jesus, and that command is certainly a strong incentive to mission work and must be stressed to the utmost. But there is another incentive: the absolute need of the heathen to hear the Gospel in this life, and since the Hades theologians ignore this need, they lessen, as far as they are concerned, the force which Scripture puts behind the missionary command.<sup>12</sup> The zeal roused by the command to preach the Gospel to the heathen is inevitably weakened by the conviction that God will take care of the heathen in other ways. Walther would certainly have weakened his powerful appeal if he had somewhere inserted the thought that the case of the heathen is not utterly hopeless. And if any of his hearers really believed the Hades gospel, they would have said: The preacher has no right to speak of utter hopelessness. We do not think that Pastor Harms went too far when, discussing the assertion that those who did not hear the Gospel on earth must be given an opportunity to hear it in Hades, he wrote in his *Hermannsburger Missionsblatt*:

<sup>11</sup> Similar statements: "What will happen to those in heathen lands who never hear the Gospel of Christ? Will they be saved, since they are not to blame for their ignorance? Answer: There are many dogmatic assertions covering this field. In Paul's Letter to the Romans, the first chapter, the Apostle makes plain, I think, that heathens, so called, will be judged by the light that they possess. Absolutely they will not be charged with the rejection of a Savior whom they have never heard. *But I also know that we who have known Him must make Him known even unto the ends of the earth*" (*Christian Herald*, August, 1940. Our italics). See also the statement of J. A. W. Haas, quoted above: "Christendom which fails to herald Christ and to go into all the world is held responsible for not declaring the message to every creature." Note the context.

<sup>12</sup> Professor Milton, as quoted above, says: "We know what peace and joy that salvation brings in *this life*" (our italics). We would have added: We know that unless the heathen hear the Gospel in this life, they will not be saved. Does Professor Milton mean to say: "Though the heathen can be saved in Hades, we still ought to bring them the Gospel now, because they would thereby be spared the joylessness that marks the earthly life of the unconverted"?

"This article is most harmful to the cause of missions, for people will be right in saying that, if there is still a chance for the heathen to be converted after death, or, as the article states, that 'in Hades the preaching of the Lord will have *greater* success,' the mission among the heathen is a matter of no great importance." (See *Lutheraner*, 1882, p. 109.) — The Hades gospel, invented for the purpose of saving universal grace, tends to thwart the will of God to save all men, as exhibited in the universality of the mission command.

How, then, we finally ask, shall we harmonize the universality of grace with the fact that so many never hear the Gospel and are lost? We cannot accept the solution of the difficulty offered by the Hades gospel. That is an unscriptural solution. There is only one way out of the difficulty. Scripture asks us to *believe* in the universality of grace in spite of the objections of the rationalizing flesh.

Pieper: "Universal grace is and remains an article of *faith*. And the fact that not all nations on earth and not all individuals in any one nation have had the Gospel should not move us to doubt the *gratia universalis et seria*, which Scripture so clearly teaches. The judgments of God by which He punishes the despisal of the Gospel also in the *descendants* are, as the Formula of Concord points out, *unsearchable*, Rom. 11:33 f.: 'How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.' In order to save universal grace before the forum of human understanding some . . . have assumed that after this life an opportunity to hear the Gospel and to believe will be offered. But these are human speculations, without any basis in Scripture. Accordingly, if we want to stand on Scripture, there is but one thing to do: we must *believe*, because Scripture clearly teaches it, the universality of saving grace. The facts of history *seem* to be in conflict with this. But it does not behoove us to interpret the clear Scriptures according to our dim understanding of the ways of God in history. In the eternal life, when our understanding of God and divine things will no longer be fragmentary (*ἐκ μερὸς*, 1 Cor. 13:12), this dark matter, too, will become clear to us" (*op. cit.*, II, p. 37).

Faith does not hesitate to recognize that there are judgments of God which are unsearchable, and it refuses to judge God. It is one of the rudiments of Christian theology that certain difficulties must be left unsolved. The Hades theologians themselves confess that faith must accept the judgments of God which it cannot understand. We heard Luckock's statement concerning the limits of "our finite comprehension" and the need of "exercising implicit faith." (See September issue, p. 607.) Faith must learn, and likes to study, the lesson in Christian theology which the Formula of

Concord thus presents: "When we see that God gives His Word at one place but not at another . . . in these and similar questions Paul [Rom. 11:22 ff.] fixes a certain limit to us how far we should go, namely, that in the one part we should recognize God's judgment [for He commands us to consider in those who perish the just judgment of God and the penalties of sins]. For they are well-deserved penalties of sins when God so punishes a land or nation for despising His Word that the punishment extends also to their posterity. . . ." But is not the grace of God universal? "We cannot harmonize it, which, moreover, we have not been commanded to do" (*Trig.*, p. 1081). The Apology of the Book of Concord expounds the lesson further thus: "And, as we have heard Luther say above, we do not want to inquire curiously about our dear Lord in so far as He is hidden and has not revealed Himself. For it is and remains too high for us, and we cannot comprehend it; the more we pry into it, the farther we get away from our dear God and the more will we doubt concerning His gracious will toward us. So also the Book of Concord does not deny that God does not work alike in all men; for at all times there have been many whom He had not called through the public ministry. . . . For it is sufficient that, when this depth of the mysteries of God confronts us, we say with the Apostle (Rom. 11): 'Unsearchable are His judgments.' . . . Was darueber ist, wird uns unser Seligmacher Christus im ewigen Leben selbst offenbaren." (See Pieper, *op. cit.*, II, p. 587.)

It is indeed a lesson that is not easy to learn. "The universality of Christ has always been a hard fact for men to grasp and hold." Reason insists on harmonizing the universality of grace with the facts of history and, as Luther puts it in his letter to Hans von Rechenberg, "rebels at being kept in ignorance." It becomes the business of faith to pluck out the eyes of nature, "Da muss der Natur Auge ganz ausgerissen sein und lauter Glaube da sein." It is easy to solve the difficulty by way of the Hades gospel; that satisfies our reason. But we must go the hard way and pluck out the eyes of reason. May the dear Lord strengthen our faith. "This is faith's most noble and precious quality that in this case it closes its eyes, willingly abstains from these investigations and gladly leaves it to God" (Luther, X:2003).

It is a precious, salutary lesson. Learning it, we are kept from committing a great evil: "Da muss der Natur Auge ganz ausgerissen sein und lauter Glaube da sein; *es geht sonst ohne greuliche, gefaehrliche Aergernisse nicht ab.*" Carnal reason inspires men to say that God must preach the Gospel to the heathen in Hades else He would be "partial, unjust, unrighteous," forgetful of the obligation He "owes" men. The Hades theology in effect

condemns God as not conforming to man's sense of equity. (See September issue, pp. 605 ff.) How shall we escape these "horrible, perilous offenses"? Let faith rule, the faith which abstains from investigating and harmonizing and leaves the matter to God.

And we will desist from these curious, evil investigations the more readily as God has assured us that He will solve the difficulty for us in His own good time (1 Cor. 13:12)! "Was darueber ist, wird uns unser Seligmacher Christus im ewigen Leben selbst offenbaren." We read in the *Proceedings of the Eastern District*, 1876, p. 30: "Why so many do not hear the Gospel and as a result thereof do not believe, is a great, unfathomable mystery. Let the world heap scorn upon us Christians on that account and blaspheme God. The day is coming when all shall see that God, in spite of the perdition of so many souls, still is the eternal love." (See also *Proceedings Northern District*, 1876, p. 29.) Faith can afford to wait. And it is of the nature of faith to wait for the Lord.

Our present discussion may be summed up in the words with which Dr. Stoeckhardt concludes his study of 1 Peter 3:19f.: "Everything now depends on what the sinners do here on earth about Christ. That determines their eternal fate. Here one might ask: But how about those who have heard nothing of Christ? And why is it that all did not hear? Why has God not given His Word at all times at all places? These questions touch upon a domain which is utterly closed and hidden to us. Here begin the mysteries of God, into which we cannot and should not search. Scripture confines our thinking to the state of affairs produced by the Gospel, the offer of salvation through Christ. Our sole business is to carry out Christ's command and preach the Gospel to every creature, to testify to all that without Christ there is no salvation, that he that believes on Christ is saved, but he that believeth not will be damned." The question is not: Has God done His duty toward the heathen? The question is: Are we doing our duty? With that, faith concerns itself. Doing that, it rests content.

TH. ENGELDER

## The Lord's Prayer, the Pastor's Prayer

### The Conclusion

Matthew 6:13: "Ὅτι σου ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ἀμήν."

First we treat this conclusion as a doxology. It is numbered among the noteworthy rejected readings. We agree that it is a reading; we acknowledge that it is a noteworthy reading; we

regret that it is a rejected noteworthy reading. Who rejected it? Griesbach, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, Wordsworth, the majority of editors. Why? "The principle argument rests on its absence from four of the oldest uncials (N B D Z) and five cursive MSS., from the Latin and Coptic versions, and from the citations of the Latin Fathers" (*The Bible Commentary*, F. C. Cook, Ed.). *The Expositor's Greek Testament* states as textual criticism: "The doxology  $\sigma\tau\iota\ \sigma\upsilon\upsilon\ \dots\ \alpha\mu\eta\eta\upsilon$  is wanting in N B D Z and is regarded by most modern critics as an ancient liturgical assertion." The expositor then makes the following successive leaps: "... a liturgical ending, no part of the original prayer, and tending to turn a religious reality into a devotional form." In the "Introduction Concerning the Three Gospels" the same author suggests five canons to be relied on legitimately for the attestation of authenticity. His third canon reads as follows: "Sayings found only in a single Gospel may be accepted as authentic when they sympathize with and form a natural complement to other well-attested sayings." His fourth canon reads: "All sayings possess intrinsic credibility which suit the general historic situation." In a later paragraph the author asks: "Is the Lord's Prayer the Lord's at whatever time given to His disciples?" All this seems confusing. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* leaps thus: "The doxology 'for Thine is the kingdom,' etc., which appears in the Greek *textus receptus* and has been adopted in the later editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*, is undoubtedly an interpolation." *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* states: "The oldest form of the doxology, as would appear from the *Didache*, omits 'the kingdom' and 'Amen.' The 'Amen' probably did not appear in the original text of Matthew and Luke. At an early period, however, it was imported into the Christian literature from the synagog prayers." *The Commentary on the Holy Bible* (Dummelow, Ed.) remarks: "The R. V. rightly omits the Doxology, which is a liturgical addition, dating, however, from an early age, for it is found in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (circa 80—160 A. D., but probably before 100). It is Jewish in origin." *The Bible Commentary*, however, adds to the statement quoted above that the doxology "is found with occasional variations in nine uncials and at least 150 cursives." *Clark's Commentary* has the following note on this doxology: "ancient, in use among the Jews, should not be left out of text merely because some MSS. have omitted it, and it has been variously written in others." *The International Critical Commentary* writes: "Its insertion seems to be due to the liturgical use of the Lord's Prayer, and the early forms of it vary. k has: 'quoniam est tibi virtus in saecula saeculorum'; S2: 'because Thine is the kingdom and the glory forever and ever, Amen.'" I was not able to find any



reference to the authenticity of the Doxology as doubtful in the centuries before Bengel and Griesbach. The older Lutheran theologians seem to have seen no reason to treat it as an interpolation. Luther expounds this text in his treatise on the Sermon on the Mount without questioning its authenticity. That liberal theologians under the Lutheran name are capable of leaping like *The Exp. Gr. Test.* and others does not surprise us. Whoever stands pat on the Scriptures does not leap. A. B. Bruce is still in mid-air. He admits this by the general statement: "While the experts in modern criticism have done much to provide a purer text, their judgments in many cases do not accord, and their results cannot be regarded as final" (*The Exp. Gr. Test.*, I, 52). Yet this expositor states definitely: "a liturgical ending, no part of the original prayer, and tending to turn a religious reality into a devotional form." But "every argument must be clear, satisfactory, convincing" (E. C. Griffith). With respect to the rejection of the Doxology, the arguments of the modern critics are not clear, satisfactory, convincing. Bruce's third canon, when applied by right to the entire *textus receptus*, speaks for, and not against, the retention of the Doxology. (1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; Rev. 7:10.) His fourth canon can also be used in favor of the Doxology. Doxologies are nothing exceptional, but in common use in the Old Testament and no less in the New Testament. They are a characteristic mark of the true religion, for they express confidence in God and love to Him, free of fear. They are an evidence of the perfect communion of the saints below and the saints above. Jesus does not omit doxologies. His omission of this doxology in Luke is no more an evidence against it than His omission in Luke of the ascription "Who art in heaven" argues against its authenticity in Matthew. But  $\aleph$  BDZ omit it. Yet  $\Delta\Sigma$ , and many others have it. The trustworthy *Peshitto* records it. So we abide by the *textus receptus*. Modern criticism rejects this text until it is proved tenable; we accept the *textus receptus* until it is proved untenable. Doxologies recorded in Scripture need not be traced to liturgical orders. And ought not every religious reality be turned into practice and applied in our devotional forms? A liturgical form does not render a religious reality less real or the text which teaches the reality less authentic.\*

There is no need of informing our congregations that modern criticism has relegated this doxology to the noteworthy rejected readings. Some members may question its inspiration. But if we

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\* On the question of the genuineness of the doxology opinions differ and probably will continue to differ. It is important for all of us to see that we are here dealing with a point of scholarship, and not with a test of loyalty to the Scriptures. — Ed. NOTE.

discuss with our members, as we sometimes do, the modern attacks on the text of Scripture or the various readings, we must also assure them that the doctrine of verbal inspiration and modern textual criticism are not the same thing. "Wenn wir von der Inspiration der Schrift handeln, so wirkt der Hinweis auf Abschreibefehler und andere Ursachen der 'verschiedenen Lesearten,' die sich in den Abschriften finden, verwirrend, wenn wir nicht zugleich genuegend darlegen, dass diese Dinge mit der Inspiration der Schrift nichts zu tun haben" (F. Pieper, *C. T. M.*, Vol. I, p. 469).

As the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are recorded in various forms also in the Old Testament, so we find the Conclusion in 1 Chron. 29:10-13, a solemn effusion of awe and wonder. The objection that the use of the Conclusion is a surrender to the Hebrew custom of beginning and closing a prayer must be met by 1 Tim. 1:17; Rom. 11:33-36. Is Hebrew custom carried into heaven? For we wait eagerly for the moment when we may join those who stand before the Lamb and with sinless tongue and pure lips praise the Lord: "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:10). The Book of Revelation is crowded with doxologies. The doxology therefore is not confined to Hebrew custom or mere liturgical practice: It is the expression of praise offered by the universal Church at all times on earth and in heaven.

But strictly speaking the Conclusion is not a doxology. It is an argumentation. I know of no inspired doxology which is introduced with  $\delta\alpha$ . The Conclusion refers to the petitions as a unit, and it is appended to the prayer to reinforce each petition. It is directed to the Father, yet not to the exclusion of Jesus, who taught us to pray with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The  $\delta\alpha$  — for, because — is argumentative. We are taught to advance arguments for praying, and for praying as we do. One such argument is God's command to pray and praise; another is His promise to hear and to answer. Jacob prays: "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." The Syrophoenician woman argued: "Truth, Lord! Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Jeremiah is quick with arguments in his lamentations and in his prayers. "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee. Yet let me reason the case with Thee" (Jer. 12:1). And v. 3: "But Thou, O Lord, knowest me: Thou hast seen me and tried my heart toward Thee." (See Jer. 15:15; 10:6; 14:9.) Moses pleaded argumentatively. Jesus adduces arguments in His Sacerdotal Prayer and in His first prayer on the Cross. The Psalms teach us how to reason with the Father. Jesus tenderly plants arguments into our hearts, where they should grow and become fruitful. In the verse preceding the Lord's

Prayer He says: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." Our own need, our neighbor's need, the past, the present, the future, the blood of Jesus offer many arguments which might be embodied in this conclusion. The conclusion of this prayer includes the reason why we call to the Father, our ground for believing that He will answer our prayer; the praise for His hearing and answering; our dependence on Him and our sincere promise to serve Him. And since we are not bound to the exact form of the Conclusion, we may extend and augment our argument by a reverent reference to the wisdom and knowledge of God, to His grace and mercy, to His omniscience and omnipresence, to His faithfulness. This we do not in the critical spirit of altering or improving the substance, but in the freedom of enriching the form. The Conclusion expresses our filial trust and confidence in the Father and His unfailing love.

The word *Amen* was used already by the children of Israel. (Deut. 27:15.) Jesus used it often. The Church repeats it here in time and there in eternity. No sooner have our petitions and arguments been uttered than we express our unwavering confidence of immediate and future experiences of the Father's providence and grace.

We may conclude the prayer with a double *Amen* as the expression of courage, submission, and confidence and as the name of our blessed Savior. Rev. 3:16: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God." Hence we may indicate, in our thoughts at least, that we close our prayer with the very name of Jesus. Then we rest our case and cheerfully trust. If we must wait, we wait for His appointed hour. "He who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth because the former troubles are forgotten and because they are hid from mine eyes" (Is. 65:16). Kings and queens, slaves and servants, have uttered this *Amen*. It marks the solemn moment of silence after the prayer in the sickroom, and it rests on the lips of the departing as the expiring breath. It seals holy wedlock, and it rises as on wings from the battlefield to God's throne. It is spoken by the strong with a resolute voice, and it is whispered by the suffering with a quivering sigh. It is heard by the Father and answered, for His is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

We remarked before that all the tenses in the petitions are the aorist. In the Conclusion, however, we have the present, *ἐστίν*, which indicates that the Kingdom, the power, the glory have always been His and are His now. That these realms will be His in eternity is clearly stated in the text. This conclusion, used as

a doxology, reminds us of the doxology in Rev. 4:8: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come." None can wrest from Him His kingdom, power, and glory. These are secure in Him. Each realm bears the definite article. Every other kingdom, power, and glory fade into insignificance, into nothing.

The Lord's Prayer is designed for the pastor's personal and official use. As he closes the Prayer, he manifests the spirit of deepest humility: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes; . . . let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak." The beggar bows before the King; the impotent bends before the Omnipotent; the inglorious kneels in the presence of the glorious God, who lives in light which no man can approach. The begging pastor has filled his mouth with petitions to the King, reasons with the Almighty, and offers an argumentation to the wise, glorious God. The pastor speaks to God by invitation. He is a privileged person. He is a beggar made rich by the King, a weakling endowed with power and courage by the Strengtheners, robed in the merit of the Savior, introduced, supported, and unfailingly represented by the Mediator, whose glory surrounds the throne. The pastor is the child of the Father. He has access to the Father's heart. He is the ambassador who has audience with the King.

How does the pastor reason with God? He assures the Father that he does not seek his own glory, but in all things for which he asks he desires to promote the reign, power, and glory of God, which will be manifested by the hearing and granting of these petitions. The pastor asserts that there is not a trace of selfish or worldly interest in the asking and that the benefits bestowed will redound to the glory of the Father. Furthermore he argues that the Father, having bound Himself by promise, can and will answer all petitions. The Father's glory is His faithfulness and truth. But the pastor's prayer is not a childish yammering; it is not a brazen demand: It is the child's, the ambassador's, the heir's reasonable request based on God's command and promise in the opening words and supported at the conclusion by argumentation first given to the pastor, then presented by him, then accepted again by the Father.

In Jesus, for Jesus, with Jesus we rest our prayer.

Los Angeles, Calif.

G. H. SMUKAL

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## Outlines on the Standard Epistle Lessons

### Third Sunday in Advent

1 Cor. 4:1-5

The pastor is the leader of the congregation. As such the congregation looks to him as its teacher and its representative to the public. What are its norms? How is the congregation to regard him? What has it a right to expect of him?

#### The Congregation Looks to Its Pastor

1. *It rightly regards him as a minister of Christ and as a steward of the mysteries of God.*

a. A minister of Christ.

*Of Christ.* This assumes that the pastor is a Christian, one motivated in his task by the love of Christ (Rom. 12:1); else Ps. 50:16-17 would apply to him. It assumes that he is called by God into the service (Rom. 1:1b); therefore like Paul, "necessity is laid" upon him to preach the Gospel. Not a hireling, not a "professional" Christian.

Christ's *minister*, the underling of Christ, one who takes his instructions directly from Christ (lit.: underrower). The congregation wants its pastor to take his orders directly from the King and not to be browbeaten by human or ecclesiastical pressure, nor driven by the ebb and flow of public opinion, nor guided by the inclinations and whims of his own person. Christ is the Ruler, the pastor the servant. (Matt. 23:10-12; 2 Cor. 4:5.)

b. A steward of the mysteries of God.

God has left with the pastor the mysteries, secrets, which he is to dispense to his people, i. e., the Word and the Sacraments. They are not his own property; so he will not act as though they were. God has left them with him, but He will hold him accountable. (Luke 12:41 ff.) Hence the congregation rightly looks to its pastor for the correct use of these mysteries for the benefit of the *entire* congregation, knowing too that God will hold him accountable. There will be no difference between the rich and the poor, the influential and the "forgotten" fringe. The pastor will bring the mysteries to the spiritually mature and immature, the novice and the veteran, the spiritually weak, the "dead," and the manifest sinner; none must be overlooked. These mysteries must be brought to the individual members and to the collective congregation that none may be lost in the statistical jumble of human mathematics.

2. *It expects of its pastor only that he be faithful.*

a. Faithfulness is required, v. 2. The congregation has a right to expect this of its pastor because this is a part of his ministry



and stewardship. When the Word rules, they will follow. They have the right and duty to judge this faithfulness on the basis of Scripture (the Bereans).

They will expect their pastor to preach the Word, *all* of it, not only that which tickles a few or is convenient for the times. His purpose will be to preach for entry into, and life in, the kingdom of God (John the Baptist). He will be expected to admonish the erring (Ezek. 33:7-9; Luke 3:10-14), to strengthen the weak and to comfort the penitent.

b. But the congregation will not expect more than faithfulness, not any gifts which the Lord did not give the pastor.

There was trouble in Corinth. Partisanship had sprung up. Some favored Apollos, others Peter, and still others Paul. All were faithful ministers and stewards, but God had bestowed different gifts upon these three. Perhaps Peter was more aggressive, Apollos the better speaker, and Paul a better executive. Some judged Paul because he lacked the gifts of Peter or Apollos. Others criticized Peter and Apollos for the gifts they lacked. Concerning this type of judgment Paul says: vv. 3-5. Paul was not conscious of any guilt because he lacked one or the other gift as long as he was a faithful minister and steward. He had the assurance that he could stand before their judgment because he could stand before Christ's judgment. His conscience was bound only in the Word.

c. Since the congregation rightly expects its pastor to be faithful in the Word and is aware of the fact that he too is human, they must pray for him, offer him co-operation, and encourage him in a faithful ministry and stewardship.

ARTHUR C. REPP

## Fourth Sunday in Advent

### Phil. 4:4-7

In the next two days we shall once more join in the celebration of one of Christianity's greatest festivals, Christmas. What a joyful season it will be in this year of 1945! The world's blackest of all wars is over. Many of our dear ones are back at the family hearth for the first time in years. Others will return soon. But our greatest joy will always center about the Christ Child, whose birthday it is. Hence how timely the theme of today's Epistle:

### "Rejoice in the Lord Always!"

1. *Our text gives us two reasons for joy in the Lord.*

A. Because "the Lord is at hand," v. 5; i. e., His coming is very near and very certain. The Lord's imminent nearness in the second advent was a common theme in the early Church (Rev.

1:7; 3:11; 22:12, 20) and with Paul (1 Thess. 2:19-20; 3:13; 5:1-10). And since our Savior's second advent is at the very door (Jas. 5:8-9), we ought to rejoice in Him always, in fair weather and in foul (Ex.: Paul in prison, Phil. 1:7, 12-14; writing an epistle of joy, Phil. 1:18-25; 2:2, 17-18, 31; 4:4, 10); for when the Lord is come, all things earthly, viewed in their proper perspective, will look trivial indeed, and the only things of value will be the treasures of heaven (Matt. 6:19-21; 16:24-26). The celebration of our Savior's birth also reminds us forcibly of God's literal fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's first advent (Gen. 49:10; Is. 7:14; 11:1-10; 40:3; Jer. 23:5-6; Micah 5:2). Shall not God, therefore, just as literally fulfill also all the promises concerning His second coming (to wreak vengeance upon all adversaries, Jude 14, 15; 2 Thess. 1:7-8, and to reward His own, 2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:1-8; 1 Pet. 5:4; 4:13; Rom. 8:8; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:17; John 10:28)? Hence: v. 4.

B. Our second reason for joy, v. 7 (literally: "And the peace of God . . . shall guard your hearts. . ."). Here God assures us that if we, like Paul, rejoice not in our own spiritual achievements, but in the Lord and in His righteousness, imputed unto us by faith (Phil. 3:4-9), then we shall have the peace which was attained for us all by Christ, v. 7 (Luke 2:14; Eph. 2:17-19; Col. 2:19-23). And this peace, which passes all human comprehension (1 Cor. 2:7-14), shall be like a faithful watchman about the castle of our lives on account of Jesus, v. 7. Hence: v. 4.

*2. However, our text also tells us how we are to manifest this joy in the Lord.*

A. We are to show it towards all our fellow men by the practice of "moderation," v. 5 (lit. "reasonableness"; Matthew Arnold: "sweet reasonableness"; including gentleness, patience, selflessness, equity, and mildness). We have Paul's example in Phil. 1:15-18; 2:1-8; 4:1-3, 10, 18). Do we always show a similar spirit of love and forbearance? Admonishing and warning, as did Paul (Phil. 3:2-15, 17-19), but always with "sweet reasonableness" (2 Tim. 2:24-26; Philemon 7-10; 14, 17-21; Gal. 6:1)? How often we sin here!

B. We are to manifest our joy also in our attitudes towards care, v. 6 (lit.: "Be full of anxiety for nothing"). How beautiful the example of Paul! He wrote this letter while in prison (Phil. 1:7), rejoicing (v. 4 and Phil. 1:12-14) while facing a possible death sentence (Phil. 1:20-26; 2:17-18), taking all to God in prayer (v. 6; Acts 16:25). How often we fail here! (Hymn 457.)

*Conclusion:* That God should offer us His peace in the Christ Child (Luke 2:14), so that when He shall come again, we may

stand in His presence with everlasting joy, is something of which we are not worthy. When we, therefore, hear the Christmas angel declare unto us: Luke 2:11, may we—with hearts full of joy, with lives rich in forbearance toward others, with lips moving in trustful prayer with thanksgiving, and with souls made calm and secure in the possession of the peace of God—"to Bethlehem hasten to worship the Lord."

THEO. F. NICKEL

## Christmas Day

Titus 2:11-14

Christmas is recognized by nearly all people as the greatest of all festivals, but its true significance and importance is frequently misunderstood and ignored. To many people Christmas is merely a time for good food, brilliant lights, and holiday gaiety, a time to make children happy. We must emphasize the real meaning of Christmas. Our text teaches us

### The Importance of the Christmas Festival

1. *It commemorates a sublime historical event*
2. *It has a tremendous significance for humanity*

#### 1

The most important pages of history are those that depict the appearance of something new in the world—the discovery of a new continent, the founding of a new nation. The most sublime event of history was the appearance of the grace of God that bringeth salvation (v. 11), the birth of the Savior (Luke 2).

God was always gracious (Ex. 34:6; 2 Chr. 30:9). His grace was always known to believers (Jonah 4:2). But its fullness appeared to all men when Christ was born (John 1:14). Men conscious of their sin might believe God to be forever angry, unapproachable, vindictive; but the birth of Christ exhibits Him as a gracious God. The simple Christmas story of the Gospels, known to every Christian, taught to little children, portrayed in picture and celebrated in song, is lifted to the height of sublime importance. It is the most important event in all the world's history, because in the birth of Christ there has appeared to all men the grace of God. Many events in history are important only for some people, some nations. This event is important for all people (v. 11; Luke 2:10). It is no wonder that this event has engaged the skill of the greatest artists and the pens of the greatest poets. It is right that the Christian Church celebrates the Christmas festival like no other in the church calendar and that we urge all the world to celebrate this glorious event with us.

## 2

But what can be the significance for humanity of the birth of this Child in Bethlehem? Once a child was born in the little city of Eisleben in the Old World; that was an important event because that child became the great Reformer. Once a child was born in the backwoods of Kentucky, and that child became the emancipator of the slaves in our land. But the birth of the Child in Bethlehem had epochal significance for humanity, because that Child was the Savior of the world.

Jesus has redeemed us from all iniquity by His vicarious suffering and death, v. 14. Forgiveness of sins is available for all who accept Him in faith. The greatest burden of humanity is taken away. The wall that separates men from God is torn down. The greatest need of humanity is supplied. The most fearful disease of the race is cured. The greatest fear in the hearts of men, the fear of divine wrath and eternal punishment for sin, is removed. Truly, the event at Bethlehem has tremendous significance for humanity.

But is there any significance in the birth of Christ for *this life*? We are concerned very much with the things that make this a better world. The grace of God brings about virtue and goodness in the world (vv. 12 and 14b). Men who believe in the Savior, whose sins are forgiven, will strive to deny ungodliness, to avoid sin, to live orderly and decently, to be kind and friendly. It will be a better world. There will be more happiness. And when there is unhappiness, trouble, and sorrow, those who believe in the Savior have hope and comfort (v. 13), the assurance that Jesus will come again and take them to heaven, where there will be no sorrow nor crying (Rev. 7:16, 17).

All this comes from the event that we celebrate today, this event of sublime importance and greatest significance for humanity. Hymn 107: 1, 4.

FREDERIC NIEDNER

### Sunday after Christmas

#### Gal. 4:1-7

Great are the honors and distinctions the world bestows upon those it deems worthy of them. The military leaders who conquered in the late war, the heroes who emerged safely from feats of reckless daring, are lauded by the press and feted by dignitaries. Sometimes a grateful generation will remember the founders and saviors of nations for centuries and place them into the hall of fame. Yet the dictum of Solomon applies: "All is vanity." Of a distinction to be coveted much more the text speaks: the simple honor of being a Christian, or, in the language of Paul, a son of God.

# **Blessed Are the Sons of God**

1. *Who are the sons of God?*
2. *Why are they blessed?*

## **1**

a. The Apostle writes of a time when he and his fellow Jews were believers, but had not yet come of age in the sense of the text, vv. 1-3. He refers to the Old Testament economy, when their status was that of minors, who are subjected to restrictions. Under the Old Covenant the Jews were held in bondage under the "elements of the world," the Law with its moral and ceremonial and political statutes. Their condition then was like that of a child whose father had died and who, although the heir of the house, as a minor is under the guardianship of tutors and governors. Virtually the state of the minor heir did not differ from that of a slave (chap. 5:1), since he could not exercise control over his property. Just so the Old Testament Israelites sighed under the "weak and beggarly elements" (v. 9; Col. 2:20), which held them in virtual serfdom. They could not even kindle a fire on the Sabbath day or walk farther than a Sabbath's journey.

b. That economy ended with the "time appointed of the Father" (v. 2), "the fullness of the time" (v. 4). Jesus Christ came forth from the throne of the Father. God's and the Virgin's Son subjected Himself to the same law that held the world in thralldom, fulfilled its requirements and suffered its penalty, and so merited divine sonship for all mankind (chap. 3:13). This emancipation releases the former slaves, both Jews and Gentiles, and renders them sons of God the moment they accept it in faith. What a glorious redemption! St. John exclaims: 1 John 3:1; cp. 2 Pet. 1:4. They breathe the air of full New Testament liberty, free from restrictions (Rev. 5:10).

c. Who, then, are sons of God? All those who are not only created, but also begotten of God (James 1:18; John 1:13; 1 John 3:3; 5:4; 1 Pet. 2:2; 1:23). Not sons in a figurative, but in the real sense. Sons of God live on earth, but their conversation is in heaven (Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6). Natural ties bind them to their families, but holier bonds unite them with Christ (Matt. 12:50). They are lights in the Lord (Eph. 5:8), walk in the light (1 John 1:7), shine as lights in the world (Matt. 5:16). A temple of God, associates of the angels, and the horror of Satan. Their hearts are filled with a heavenly fire, their lips with the praises of God, and their hands with good works.

## **2**

Their blessedness consists in:

a. The absence of slavish fear of God. V. 6, sons, in contrast to minors, v. 1. V. 7, son, in contrast to slave. "Ye" and "thou" express



that the Gentile Galatians are no more under the Law than the New Testament Israelites. The "weak and beggarly elements" have been abolished (Col. 3:16). The Moral Law still stands, but cannot condemn them (v. 5; chap. 3:13). Yes, they are no longer under the Law (1 Tim. 1:9). They delight to do His will (1 John 3:22; 5:3).

b. The intimate relationship to the Father (v. 6). They have the privilege of communing with Him 24 hours of the day, knowing that He answers all their prayers in Jesus' name (1 John 3:21-22; Ps. 10:17; Mark 11:24). The Spirit of the Son bears witness in them to their sonship (Rom. 8:16), and prays in them and for them (v. 26).

c. The inheritance bestowed on them with sonship (v. 7; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:4). Their exalted Brother inherits because of His divine sonship; so the sons and daughters of God, as real children of their heavenly Father, become joint heirs through and with Christ (Rom. 8:17). And what a glorious inheritance! (1 John 3:2.) Hymn 391.

L. J. ROEHM

## New Year's Eve

### Psalm 107

The beginning and the end of the text are supported, sustained, and illustrated by the middle. The verses between the first and last relate historical events covering the passing of many years. As the years roll on, these events re-occur. The fleeting years are a record of God's enduring mercy.

### The Christian Earnestly Ponders the Course of Events

1. *In wisdom*      2. *In comfort and hope*      3. *In gratitude*

#### 1

As the wise children of God, we observe, and keep in memory and contemplation: 1. the decline of humanity, of a nation, of the masses, of a community, of a church, or of an individual, which is sometimes slow and gradual, sometimes speedy and sharp, and always by choice of the backsliding and slipping; 2. the resurrection and restoration, the deliverance and salvation, wrought by the Lord in mercy and kindness (vv. 1, 43). 3. The Psalm depicts by a succession of contrasts: a. that man can only fall, being a fool, dead in transgression, in darkness, bound, rebellious; b. that the Lord alone lifts up and saves. — The Psalmist carries out a double theme, the leading one the Lord's enduring mercy, developed in many variations, and the counter theme, man's sin, helplessness, pride, in as many variations. Man stumbles to perish whenever he departs from the Lord; but the Lord delivers those who repent and return and then cry unto Him.

As we number our days and close this year, let us be wise. This past year, with the year of creation and the years of our Savior's sojourn, is history above every preceding year. The wise consider to understand the history of the Lord's kindness against the black background of the history of man. We pray for such wisdom (Ps. 90:12). We were in great trouble during the year as a nation, as a church, as individuals, and we are in great trouble now. Repent! Why? Pray! Why? The text answers. Cp. Ps. 50:15a. And the wisdom of the Holy Spirit prompts us to observe Eph. 4:22-24. True wisdom presupposes faith in Jesus (vv. 1, 2, 43).

2

The Lord's kindness experienced and learned by others (vv. 2-30) is promised generally vv. 31-43. For our comfort. 1. The days are evil. Temptations to sins of all kinds are strong in this solemn hour: to worldliness, to worries, to despair, to pride and self-righteousness. The Old Adam does not want to resist the downward pull. And where is the promised freedom from fear? Oppression is active. 2. The Lord's mercy in Christ, His judgments upon all ungodly men, His wise government and gracious providence, all this is promised to us by His lavish kindness. In Him who dispels all fear we have true freedom from fear. (Ps. 50:15b.) For our hope. The Christian is not a pessimist, because his faith and hope is centered on the goodness and mercy of the Lord in Christ Jesus. Jesus is determined to deliver us (Ps. 50:15b). We are hopeful for ourselves (1 Pet. 1:5; Luke 12:31). We are hopeful for His Church (2 Tim. 2:19; Luke 12:32). The new man rises on wings of hope far above the hopeless confusion of this transitory world to realize the promises of the enduring mercy of Jesus. Hope is another year closer to the final redemption.

3

The Psalmist rehearses man's ingratitude to God and its dire consequences. The ungrateful are sullen and envious in this evening hour. Ungrateful people are never really happy, because the unpaid debt of gratitude to God distresses them in spite of their boasted independence, flightiness, and daring.

The refrain (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31) is one of the chief lessons of the text, and it must be the Christian's chief concern at the turn of the year. The Lord was merciful and good. He averted all evil. We were dangerously close to devastation, to riots, to collapse of trade and commerce; we were threatened by the antichrists and their destructive schemes; we were in peril of death; always Satan prowled about to devour us. The Lord delivered us. — The Lord

blessed us: our person, work, family, church, fields, nation, even as the text states. He has blessed us with the grace of gratitude. Let us now use this gift and display our virtue (v. 1, 32; Ps. 34, 3; 50:15c).

Conclusion: v. 7.

G. H. SMUKAL

## New Year's Day

Gal. 3:23-39

As today's Gospel stresses the changeless name, person, and work of our Savior, so the Epistle emphasizes the changelessness of the way to salvation through faith in the name, person, and work of Christ Jesus.

### In the Constant Change of Times the Way of Salvation Is Always the Same

#### 1. *Times change.*

Vv. 23-25. Paul speaks of a great change that had come for his readers when they were brought to faith in Christ Jesus as the promised Messiah. They had been transferred from the era and domination of the Mosaic Law to the era of faith and its glorious freedom. ("Faith" = the New Testament condition of believers.) That was a very real change. Under the Mosaic Law the Jews, including the Galatian Jews who were now Christians, "were kept" (like prisoners) deprived of much of the liberty of New Testament Christians, watched lest they escape. "Shut up" again states that the Jews, also the believing Jews, were *restricted* by the Law, but the stress is now on the limitation: "unto the faith," etc. The imprisonment was but for a limited time, the Old Testament era of waiting and hoping for the New Covenant, to be ushered in by the coming of the Messiah.

V. 24 compares the irksome domination of the Mosaic Law with its multitudes of rules and regulations to the rule of a "school-master," i. e., a guardian of boys, supervising them and correcting their deportment. The restraining influence of the guardian was of course beneficial to the boy; but it was nevertheless a bondage for him, making him sigh for the time when it would be lifted. In a similar situation were the Jews, also the believing Jews, under the Mosaic Law. Describe some of the restrictions placed upon the Jews; cp., e. g., Lev. 11, particularly vv. 24-40. However, with the coming of Christ that irksome bondage ended for such Jews as became Christians, for He brought them to the full freedom of God's children.

The new year brings changes for our generation, also for us Christians: change from wartime to peacetime living, change in

the nation's politics, in the lives of individuals, etc. Such changes often very vitally affect our lives for the better or for the worse.

Since so many things change, since times and conditions change, it is often thought and taught that similar changes must take place in religion also. But that is a disastrous fallacy.

*2. The way of salvation is always the same.*

For the Jews the way of salvation did not change at the coming of Christ. Vv. 23-25 do not say that the Jews of old were saved by the Law. The preceding context argues that they were saved, like Abraham, by faith in God's gracious promises (see esp. vv. 21-22). Abraham and many of his descendants were saved by such faith long before the Mosaic Law came, and that Law was not intended to supplant the promise, but came in between for other purposes (better knowledge of sin, to make them more desirous of the salvation to be wrought by the Messiah, to keep them separated from the Gentiles, so that salvation might be of the Jews, John 4:22).

When Christ had come, the Mosaic Law was lifted from off their shoulders and never placed on the shoulders of the Gentile Christians. The second part of the text makes it a point to show that there is no difference between the members of the New Testament Church. The Jews who had been under the bondage of the Law were now just as free as the Gentiles who had never shared in that bondage. Through Baptism they all alike came to faith in Christ and have also put on Christ like a garment, and are therefore all alike. Their spiritual beauty is Christ, who of God is made unto them wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

In spite of all changes time and conditions may bring, there will be in the new year, and until the end of time, no other way to salvation than faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His atoning sacrifice. Hymn 346. F. WENGER

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## Epiphany

Is. 60:1-6

Today we are celebrating a joyous festival — Epiphany. Epiphany means manifestation. It is called the Feast of Manifestation because it is celebrated in memory of the first manifestation of Jesus to the heathen (Matt. 2:1-11). This introduction of the Christ is to continue till Christ comes again, when every knee shall bow before Him. In our text for today we hear God Himself calling upon His people to show the Christ Child to the Gentiles.

**Arise, Shine!****1**

*To whom is God addressing this invitation?* Isaiah spoke to Israel. There can be no doubt about it, therefore, that these words are addressed to the children of Abraham, to the true Israel of God. And who are these blessed people? The Bible tells us: Gal. 3:7. Cf. Rom. 9:8b; Rom. 4:16b. These are the believers who are justified by faith. They are blessed people (Luke 10:23). They are the people who have suffered the cutting, painful blows of God's Law and have by the grace of God accepted the healing balm of Gilead, the gracious forgiveness of sin through the blood of the Redeemer (John 3:16; 1 John 1:7). They are the people in whom the Holy Ghost has through the Gospel begun the good work of true faith and godliness (Gal. 3:2).

In short, this glorious invitation is addressed to us Christians, to you and to me; cf. Matt. 5:14-16.

Are you telling me that you do not consider yourself such a light? If you are a Christian, even though you are but a "smoking flax," a very weak Christian, God tells you to fan that little spark into a bright flame. That is the very purpose of these words: "Arise, shine!"

How are we to accomplish this?

We are to remember that Christ in His Word is the Light of the world (John 8:12). Because we have this Word, we Christians also are the light of the world. Christ wants to shine in this world through us, through you. Therefore He calls to you, "Arise, shine!"

All about us the unbelieving world is sitting in darkness (darkness of sin, of ignorance, of despair), v. 2. God has given us a glorious Light (Rom. 1:16; Ps. 119:105, 130). He wants us to let it shine for those who are in darkness, so that they may come to this Light. However humble we are in ourselves, however much of sin we still see in ourselves, however severe our temptations and trials may be, in spite of all this, God wants us to shine with the light that He has given us. You Christian parents can shine before your children both by word and by life; you Christian young people can shine by your devotion to God and to parents. Wherever we are, we can shine by testimony of mouth and by our life as Christians (Titus 2:12; 1 Pet. 2:15).

Ah, it is necessary for God to appeal to us in these words, "Arise, shine!" for it is true what we sing in one of our hymns: "We are sluggish, thoughtless, cold." What would you think of a man who denies himself no comfort, who has money far above his needs, and yet can quietly see others starving and perishing? Such a one is like Dives, who ended in hell. But worse still it were



for us if we, whom God has blessed so richly, would refuse to let this light shine so that other poor, darkened souls might see it. Hymn 495:3. We are so rich in good Christian books, Bible, Catechism, hymnbook, periodicals, pamphlets, tracts; we have, moreover, so many opportunities of speaking God's Word and of living a simply Christian life that every one of us should shine in this dark world. Hymn 496:4.

2

However, our text also *paints for us a beautiful picture of the success of this work*. It assures us of rich dividends for our investments of time, strength, and money (vv. 4-6). That promise was fulfilled during the abject humiliation of the children of God in the Old Testament when the Hebrews were carried away captive to Babylon and other places, when many were won through the testimony of these captives. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did shine even in prisons. It was fulfilled when the Wise Men, the captain of Capernaum, and the Syrophoenician woman and other Gentiles came to the faith; when Paul went out to the Gentiles and gathered churches in Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, Athens, and Rome. Since then millions have turned to the shining Cross of Christ. New victories were won by the Christians who did rise and shine at the time of the Reformation. What light has been spread throughout the world through the Bible Societies of Great Britain and our country and of other countries! (If time permits, tell more of the spread of Christianity, of the great lights that were won for Christ: Augustine, Charlemagne, Luther, and others.) It is true what one has said: The Christian Church began to invite the weary and heavy laden, the beggar and the leper and the outcast, and succeeded in gathering in kings, princes, philosophers, and intellectual giants.

Dear Christian, God wants to do great things through you. He does not want you to hide yourself, He invites you to *rise and shine* with the light which He Himself has given you, and He promises you that His Word shall not return void. What our text promises, that shall be fulfilled again and again. Hymn 503.

MARTIN S. SOMMER



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## Miscellanea

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### The "Watchman-Examiner" on Dr. Engelder's Book "Scripture Cannot be Broken"

We have no doubt that our readers will share with us the joy we experienced in reading a commendatory article in the *Watchman-Examiner* on the book of our esteemed colleague just mentioned, if this article is submitted to them. The writer of the article is Dr. Faris D. Whitesell, who is professor of evangelism and director of field work in the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill. We reprint the article without omissions:

"A few books in each generation are epochal. All the others are soon gone with the winds of time. A truly epochal book for Christianity is *Scripture Cannot be Broken*, by Dr. Theodore Engelder, professor of dogmatics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. \$3). Not since Dr. B. B. Warfield, of Princeton, wrote *Revelation and Inspiration* has such a stout defense of the doctrine of the verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture been made. Dr. Engelder utterly devastates and annihilates the arguments of the opponents of verbal inspiration and tears to shreds the substitutes they offer for this glorious Scriptural doctrine. Every minister and Christian worker who has any doubts at all about the complete verbal inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Scriptures should read and master this book.

"The author takes up six widely used objections to verbal inspiration and shows how that in the light of Scripture and sound reason none of these objections can stand. The six objections are thrown into the form of questions as follows: Does the Bible contain errors? Has the Bible moral blemishes? Does the Bible deal in trivialities? Is verbal inspiration mechanical inspiration? Does verbal inspiration imply an atomistic conception and use of Scripture? And, does verbal inspiration establish a 'legalistic authority of the letter'? To each of these questions Dr. Engelder gives a resounding and well-established 'No!' He proves that verbal inspiration is really the only kind of inspiration that can exist; that this is the inspiration taught by the Scriptures themselves; that this inscription is psychologically, scientifically, and intellectually a fact.

"The writer quotes copiously from the modernists and liberals to prove that their views on inspiration are conflicting, confusing, uncertain, and ultimately destructive of genuine Christianity. He says, 'The theology of the anti-inspirationists [meaning anti-verbal inspirationalists] is from beginning to end a theology of uncertainty and doubt. It is throughout guesswork. They do not know how much of the Bible is of the substance of revelation and how much is the human forms.' (P. 416.) Again we quote: 'Have we the full sense of the grave peril confronting the church? Here is the plain truth: the denial of verbal inspiration is destructive of Christianity. It involves the loss of the Bible; this carries with it the loss of Christian doctrine; and all of

that means the destruction of the Christian religion. . . . Unless Scripture is verbally inspired, it is not inspired at all. And only because it is verbally inspired is it the firm foundation of the faith.' (Pp. 422-23.)

"Dr. Engelder says that the opposition to the doctrine of verbal inspiration can be traced back to human pride, indwelling carnality, Satanic opposition, and intellectual rebellion against the sovereign authority of Almighty God. Acceptance of this doctrine creates faith, humility, peace, and not a legalistic bondage to a book, but rather a holy and joyful bondage to God's words. 'The Christian gives willing obedience to the Word of God. . . . And here is Christian liberty! Spiritual liberty springs from obedience to God. The knowledge and acceptance of the truth makes us free (John 8:31 ff.). Liberated from the bondage of error and sin, and endowed with the Spirit of God, we are free to follow His leading and enjoy something of God's liberty. . . . He enjoys true spiritual liberty who is able to give free assent to every word of Scripture. . . . It gives the believer the wonderful spiritual strength to suppress the strong carnal impulse to belittle God's Word and exercise mastery over it. It causes him to honor and magnify every word of Scripture.' (Pp. 389, 390.)

"This is a large book of almost 500 pages containing hundreds of long quotations from both modernistic and conservative writers. It is a liberal education in modern theological thought and shows clearly the main issues in the spiritual warfare going on within the ranks of Christendom today. The book has a strong Lutheran flavor and gives great weight to the writings of Martin Luther, but all Baptists would receive vast profit from reading and studying this book. The only true basis of unity and harmonious co-operation in the work of the Lord for Baptists, as for Lutherans and all other Christians, is the acceptance of Scripture as verbally inspired and infallibly authoritative."

### **Teresa Neumann of Konnersreuth**

An article in the Roman Catholic weekly *America* (Sept. 15, 1945), written by R. H. Schenk, formerly of St. Louis University, now a U.S. chaplain, describes a meeting with Teresa Neumann in Konnersreuth, Bavaria. We reprint the important paragraphs of the article. No attempt is made to pass judgment on the reliability of the account. It is said that on her body appear the stigmata, the wounds inflicted on the Savior.

"Teresa Neumann is 47 years old now. She looks and acts like any other Bavarian peasant woman of that age. She wears a long colored dress, black, worn shoes, and a white shawl covers her head and is tied (like all shawls) under her chin. Every soldier in the room tries not to stare at her hands; invariably your eyes wander back to her hands, to the small (less than a half-inch square) scablike-looking square in the back of each hand. Teresa is not the least bit embarrassed; she talks to you as your mother or your sister would talk to you, only faster. She tells you how very happy she is to have the soldiers visit in Konnersreuth, that over 4,000 have come to see her since the Americans came. She tells you how frightened they all were when the bombers

came and they thought they would all be killed. She tells you how happy she is when colored troops come to see her because, when she had been a young girl, it was her desire to become a nursing nun and go to the missions in Africa. God had sent her sickness instead because He wanted her here; this makes up for it in part, when colored soldiers come. You'd like to ask to see the palms of her hands, but you don't request such things of a stigmatist. She informs you that she is going over to the other room to get a holy picture for each soldier present; she will gladly autograph the cards.

"While Teresa is in the other room, the pastor tells more about her in Latin; how he can testify that she has not had a particle of food or a drop of water since the year 1927 other than the Blessed Sacrament. How the doctors have come, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, to examine her and that he has their testimony that there are no signs of fraud. How Teresa is rapt in ecstasy on about thirty Fridays in each year when she witnesses the complete Passion of our Lord, beginning with the Agony in the Garden. During each of these visions some of the wounds bleed. How just two days ago, last Friday, she had the vision and the hands bled. One of the soldiers present had been there at the time and had brought others from his unit to Konnersreuth today. On Good Friday of Holy Week all the wounds bleed and she suffers extreme agony.

"Teresa returns with the pictures and distributes them to all present; she explains that these pictures of Our Lord which she has are pleasing to Him and look much like Him. This is not true of so many, which do not resemble Him at all. She points to a picture which hangs above the doorway of the parlor; this picture had been painted by a monk at her direction, but the artist did not catch the exact likeness in his work. She has only a brief message for the soldiers present, that they join with her in devotion to the Passion of Our Lord. And she will pray for each of us."

A.

### Languages Into Which the Bible Has Been Translated

During 1944 six new languages were added to the list of those in which some part of the Scriptures has been published. The new languages in which portions of the Bible were published are Gio, spoken in Liberia, Africa; Guajira, spoken in Colombia, South America; Holo, spoken in the Belgian Congo, Africa; Kim, spoken in French Equatorial Africa; Sangtam Naga and Southern Rengma Naga, spoken in Assam and Burma.

The whole Bible has been published in 184 languages, a whole Testament in 235 more; at least a complete Gospel or other Book of the Bible in 560 more; and selections in 89 more—making a total of 1,068.

Every library and every Sunday school should possess a copy of the Society's unique volume *The Book of a Thousand Tongues*, which displays sample pages or passages from the printed Scripture in the hundreds of languages in which it has been published. The book also gives fascinating information regarding the origin of many of these translations. It is profusely illustrated and supplied with useful indexes. Order from the Society at \$3.75, postpaid. — *Bible Society Record*.

### The Gospel and Doctrinal Preaching

A common fad among moderns is to belittle the Gospel by belittling doctrine. No one can read the New Testament without being convinced that the Gospel is doctrinally interpreted. Most of the New Testament is written as an interpretation of the doctrines of our salvation. That book which was to challenge the Christian Church and set it upon a new basis in foreign missions, *Rethinking Missions, a Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years*, in 1932 said this to the Christian churches of the land: "For years in most of these mission fields the message has been *doctrine centered*, sometimes almost centered upon the use of phrases. The preaching, the Bible teaching, and the Sunday school work with children have been to a very large extent built around theological conceptions. However effective this method may have been in the past, for the period now before us and for awakened minds, it is psychologically the wrong approach to begin with complicated, abstract doctrine dogmatically asserted. It runs counter to the well-tested methods in education now in vogue throughout the world."

The implication in these words indicates that the modern approach to foreign missions must be distinct from that Gospel emphasis which characterized the founding of the missions. This viewpoint has a strong hold upon the minds of many who are engaged in administering foreign mission enterprises. And yet, this avoidance of doctrine has not succeeded at home. Churches which have avoided preaching the doctrines of salvation have gradually died off or are dying off. It is the preaching of the doctrines of salvation which keeps churches alive in this land and reproduces the most desirable of church memberships. When missions abroad turn aside from doctrines that interpret Christianity, to what do they turn? If it is to philanthropy, education, or to social panaceas, then the work of those missions becomes stultified, and multiplication of its converts ceases.

The need of the world is still the Gospel, and the Church is the custodian of that Gospel. Let the churches rededicate themselves to the primary principles of the Christian faith, let them rediscover the revelation of God in His Word, let them do the work of God in the way which He Himself has exemplified in past generations, let them be motivated by that power of love which God sheds abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and we shall begin to do again that foundational work which transforms peoples and nations.

From an Editorial in the *Watchman-Examiner* of Oct. 18, 1945

### Is It Slavery?

An editorial in *America* (Sept. 15, 1945) having the title "Traffic in Humans" is herewith reprinted.

"Make what allowances we will, we cannot get away from the impression that a report in the *New York Times* for Sept. 4 smelled exactly like a bill of sale posted up in a Roman or a pre-Civil-War slave market. Stating that the 300,000 German prisoners of war now



in this country are going to be turned over to France, beginning in December, the dispatch goes on to say that 'the United States is also giving 30,000 to Belgium, and 15,000 to Luxembourg. The British are giving 15,000 to Belgium to complete her request for 45,000.' What right have the United Nations to engage in what can seem only a barter in human lives and destinies—save the 'right' that no one dares say them nay? Manpower is without doubt needed in many devastated countries; prisoners of war may be used for that purpose until the final settlement of the peace; but this kicking around of German prisoners from pillar to post, this herding them off from one country to another at a simple request, with no stipulations as to time limit, conditions of work, the desperate need for them in the rebuilding of their own country—this certainly gives a cynical brush-off to the 'human dignity' that sprang so easily to our lips when we trumpeted out our war aims. The American people would like to know if the Administration will bring its influence to bear on the other United Nations for the issuance of a clear, fair, definite statement on slave labor. To continue with the present haphazard, formless, and (to the lay mind) principle-less policy seems to us nothing less than a repudiation of Abraham Lincoln and Emancipation, to say nothing of Christ and the Sermon on the Mount."

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## Theological Observer

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**The Nature of the Church in Ecumenical Theology.**—In 1910 the Protestant Episcopal Church invited the churches to consider "the faith and order of the churches" as a preliminary step toward an ultimate union or fellowship of all denominations. About the same time Archbishop Söderblom endeavored to bring the churches together to discuss "the life and work of the churches." The aim of both movements as stated by the committee preparing for the Stockholm Conference in 1925 was to "see Christians act corporately as if they were one body in a visible community without calling theological principles into question." It was hoped that the churches, at least all Protestant churches, would find ways and means of uniting in joint church work in spite of denominational differences. On this premise the World Conference on Faith and Order was organized. But it soon became apparent that before the churches could work harmoniously for the improvement of society and the spreading of "the Gospel," it was necessary to find some relation between "the life and work of the churches" and "the faith and order of the churches." In fact, before the churches could join in any interdenominational effort, it seemed important to answer the paramount question: What is the Church? What is the function of the Church? At the World Conference on Faith and Order of Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937, Visser 't Hooft said: "What we have discovered is that we do not yet know fully what the Church is and that we must try to learn anew what is its nature and function." In other words, before the churches could launch on "a program on life and work," they must analyze the nature and function of the Church. Three commissions were appointed for this study: a commission on the Church, on ways of worship, and on intercommunion. Dr. R. Newton Flew of Cambridge, England, is chairman of the Commission on the Church. Eighteen American theologians were selected as a committee to co-operate with the three commissions. The American committee has completed its study of the nature and function of the Church, and during the past summer the report as adopted by the committee late in 1943 was published.<sup>1</sup> The committee consisted of representatives of the Baptists (K. S. Latourette), Brethren, Congregationalists (Walter Horton), Disciples (W. E. Garrison), Episcopalians, Evangelical and Reformed, Friends, Lutherans (Eric Wahlstrom and T. G. Tappert), Methodists (H. F. Rall), Presbyterians (H. P. Van Dusen), and the United Church of Canada.

The committee's report is rather unsatisfactory, not only in the points in which the members were agreed, but also where they were not agreed. The report states that all members are in essential agreement that "Jesus did not intentionally found a new religion. His religious and ethical teaching stood in direct continuity with the best

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<sup>1</sup> *The Nature of the Church, A Report of the American Theological Committee.* Willett, Clark & Company, 37 West Van Buren St., Chicago 5, Ill. 127 pages, 6×9. 75 cents.

thought of His people. . . . His aim was less to compete with the authoritative expounders of the Law than to face individuals with an absolute ethic. . . . This liberal ferment in the teachings of Jesus firmly implanted the spirit of innovation in the Christian movement. . . . Jesus was the anointed, or the Christ who would rule in the coming kingdom. God had vindicated Him by raising Jesus from the dead" (pp.10-11). The committee, however, was not agreed as to the norm for the doctrine of the Church: the New Testament? or the Church which produced and preserved the New Testament writings? or the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit? Therefore the committee could not agree as to the nature and function of the Church. It answers the question in such an ambiguous formula as: "The Church seeks to bring its Gospel to every phase of individual and social need." "In relation to its members, the function of the Church lies in three main areas: in teaching, in worship, and in service" (p.25). "The Church is the sphere of God's salvation in the present and of His ultimate triumph in the Kingdom of God. It is constituted by the revelation of His grace in Jesus Christ, its message is the Gospel of redemptive love. It is a body witnessing to His rule by their trust and obedience. This Church is set in the midst of a world where God's will is not yet done. All the branches (the various denominations) must be truly united in order to witness to His rule by their trust and obedience. This Church is set in the the Church Triumphant, which is the Kingdom of God" (p.26).

The overemphasis of the so-called visible church in Reformed theology is evident in this study, not only in the questionnaire which guided each of the commissioners in formulating his denomination's concept of the nature of the Church, but also in several of the denominational statements. The questionnaire is as follows:

- "1. In what sense did Christ 'found' the Church?
- "2. How does your Church consider that its present organization is related to New Testament doctrine and practice?
- "3. What are the characteristics of the Church as a fellowship, and what are the conditions of entrance into it, as laid down by your Church?
- "4. Has your Church a view of the relationship of the Church to Christ on which it lays special stress?
- "5. What does your Church consider most essential in the message and mission of the Church?
- "6. How does your Church conceive of the relation of the Church to the world? to the State? to the Kingdom of God?
- "7. In what way or ways does your Church consider that it is maintaining the continuity of the true Church of Christ?
- "8. What significant changes do you note in the thought and practice of your Church in the last hundred years?
- "9. What do you consider to be the distinctive contribution that your Church has to make to the Church Universal?"

Several of the denominational statements show the overemphasis of the empirical Church at the expense of the *una sancta*. The Anglican representative states: "the term invisible Church seems quite meaningless . . . for the Anglican the Church is the society of people, primarily

here on earth. . . . Not all members of the Church are saved." Judging by the diversity of opinions concerning the nature of the Church, there is little doctrinal unity among the co-operating Churches in the World Conference on Faith and Order. In fact, the theological differences become apparent in each denomination's view of the Church. The Disciples believe that their church polity and practice is a restoration of primitive Christianity (p. 59). The Congregationalists believe that in their denomination the rights of the individual conscience are recognized (p. 49). The Baptists hold that the whole number of regenerate believers constitute the body of Christ and that these cannot be ecclesiastically organized (pp. 64—71). The Presbyterian concept of the Church resembles most closely the theological position of Calvin. Methodism defines the Church, in accord with Wesley's emphasis on perfectionism, as the communion of persons seeking to be saved from their sins and desiring to lead a Christian life.

In this confusion of tongues the Lutheran child of seven years knows and declares what the Church is, namely, the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of the Shepherd (Smalcald Articles). Our Lutheran catechumens are able to distinguish between the Church in its proper sense (the *una sancta*) and in the improper sense (the so-called visible church), between Luther's "*wirkliche*" and "*gemachte*" Church. The Lutheran doctrine of the Church is oriented in its central doctrine. Reformed theology does not recognize the doctrine of justification by faith as the material principle of theology and therefore will be unable to present the correct doctrine of the nature and the function of the Church. Professor Wahlstrom follows Articles VII and VIII of the Augsburg Confession in presenting the Lutheran doctrine and distinguishes correctly between the *una sancta* and the empirical Church. We are glad that he made this valuable contribution to the committee's report. We regret, however, that the committee could not unite on a definition of the Church which is based on the central doctrine of the Christian faith: "I believe the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, for Christ's sake through faith."

F. E. MAYER

**The Institutional Chaplains' Conference.**—The clergy of the Missouri Synod will be glad to know that a number of chaplains belonging to the Synodical Conference who serve at public institutions recently met at St. Martini Church, Chicago. According to Pastor Carino, who reports on the meeting, the brethren assembled "for mutual encouragement, sharing of experiences, strengthening of conviction and faith, study of institutional missionary methods and techniques in the light of experience and research, and the discussion of various problems faced by the institutional chaplain." Papers were submitted by Chaplains M. Ilse, Sr., Enno Duemling, B. H. Schrein, A. A. Fenner, W. C. Baumann. A round-table discussion was led by Chaplain Tr. Thieme. Seven Districts of the Missouri Synod and one District of the Wisconsin Synod were represented. The subjects discussed in the papers were: Law and Gospel as Applying to the Work of the Institutional Chaplain; The Rehabilitating of the Inmates of Penal Institutions; Comfort at the Bedside; Humiliation and Pride; When the Uniforms Are Put Away. The round-table discussion dealt with Prayer in Institutions.

A.

**Revitalizing Our Appreciation of the Bible.**—In the *Lutheran Outlook* (September, 1945), Dr. H. L. Yochum offers some very interesting and encouraging comment on an article that appeared in the *Christian Century* (July 18, 1945). In its article the *Christian Century* had reported that "the doctrine of the Bible now held by European scholars is indistinguishable from the phenomenon we know in this country as Fundamentalism. Yet these scholars insist that they accept the results of the historical criticism of the Bible and share wholeheartedly in the researches of this discipline. In this they differ from our Fundamentalists. But in their actual use of the Bible it seems to their American colleagues that they make no use of the findings of critical research, but fall back upon a naive conception of the book not unlike that which obtained before the historical criticism appeared. . . . There is an obvious irony in the fact that the European theology, as if repentant for what it has done to us, comes now to rescue us from the consequences of its earlier tutelage." Dr. Yochum comments on this editorial (quoted in part) as follows: "This recent trend in Europe ought to convince all of us that the doctrine of the Bible cannot be ignored or deliberately eliminated in our efforts to establish Lutheran unity. It is more than argumentation about 'theories of inspiration.' It involves a vital problem of theology on which will hinge our whole system of doctrine and standard of practice. Can it be that the historic position of Lutheranism on the doctrine of the Bible will now receive its most compelling commendation from the people who learned more about the Bible in the crucible of warfare and suffering than can ever be discerned in the professor's theological laboratory? Shall we find our position vindicated in this most unexpected but convincing testimony which comes from the land whence came the question marks and critic's bold comments? The Book is a solid rock on which faith may build, sinking the foundation all the deeper as storms grow more violent. Our brethren in Europe have tested this Rock and found it firm, adequate for its purpose and chief use. Perhaps that is just as scientific as searching for fissures and fusions and fossils and faults in the Rock and prognosticating on the basis of our findings. The pragmatic test is scientific and profoundly convincing. Maybe we need a similar experience here in America to revitalize our appreciation of the Book." What the new conception of the Bible in Europe attests is that it is the inspired, inerrant source and rule of faith and life, the never-failing fountain of strength and comfort because of the very fact that it is the Word of God. And just that is the point on which all Lutherans, as also all other Christians, should be agreed.

J. T. M.

**Church Conditions in Germany.**—It is difficult to get a clear picture of what is happening along the church front in Germany. Reports say that a conference of prominent members of the Confessional Church (Bekennniskirche) was held in Frankfurt. The meeting had been called by Rev. Martin Niemöller. Another conference was held at Treysa, which had a still wider scope. It will be recalled that the Confessional Church consists of Lutherans, Reformed, and Evangelicals. Reports state that Protestants in Germany are endeavoring to reorganize a compre-



hensive church body, which they called the "Evangelical Church of Germany." As it appears to us, the confessional differences between the Lutheran and the Reformed churches will be ignored. If the plan succeeds, the principle of union without unity on which the decree of Frederick William III in 1817 was based will triumph.

What the churches are debating nowadays seems to be the question whether in the future the churches are to occupy themselves more with political and social matters than they did in the past. In America and Great Britain the view is often voiced that the German churches, owing to their Lutheran antecedence, were altogether too passive and docile in political matters, and thus Hitler had no difficulty in achieving that absolute control which he sought.

To us it appears that what Germany needs is a return to the Augsburg Confession and the Lutheran symbols in general. True repentance is required. If that takes place, the improvements in the social and political sphere that are so ardently sought will be forthcoming. A.

**The Similar Method of Modernism.**—Ernest Gordon in the *Sunday School Times* (August 11, 1945) reports under this heading the following: "In a Report to the Biennial Meeting of the Federal Council of Churches (December 10, 1940), entitled 'The State of the Church' and signed by Georgia Harkness, E. E. Aubrey, J. Harry Cotton, Roy Smith, E. M. Poteat, and others, occurs this sentence (p.12): 'Liberal ministers, themselves theologically instructed, have even been known to pride themselves on the extent to which they could conceal their theology from the congregation.' In the Congregationalist organ *Advance* (April, 1945) the method is explained. The title of the article is 'A Church Made New.' [The method was this]: 'An old Congregationalist church had a Fundamentalist pastor. Very little money was sent through denominational agencies, but increasing amounts were given to independent faith missions sponsored by a well-known Chicago institution [founded, apparently, by the well-known Congregationalist layman D. L. Moody.—E.G.]. Thoughtful and discriminating people began to leave. After thirty years of apostasy the church was hardly recognizable as a Congregational body. Then came a new pastor and a different one. He began to develop slowly but surely a constructive and enlightened approach to modern religious thinking. When confronted with menacing questions, he would deftly turn the discussion into other channels. Thus he was able to keep peace with what might be termed *the old guard*. He based his strategy upon a five-point plan of advance. He would endeavor to separate the church from its former Fundamentalist associations. He would draw the church into affiliation with other broad-gauged churches of the city. Sometimes anonymous letters would come asking why he did not preach sermons on the Blood Atonement, Salvation, the Second Coming, Infallibility of the Scriptures, or the Virgin Birth, but instead he would continue to give emphasis upon positive points of belief, social action, devotional subjects, and topics of spiritual inspiration. He became actively identified with varied civic affairs about town. At Lenten services the church was brought into touch with the larger downtown churches of open mind, rather than with the former group of narrow churches. This new association, of course, brought his

members into fellowship with intelligent, alert, and thoughtful ministers of keen theological perception. And the result? The transition was accomplished without the church realizing that a long-term strategy was being observed and that new appreciations were being developed of which the church had been formerly thoroughly unaware. The old hymnals were supplanted by the new *Pilgrim Hymnal*; the old book in the Church School, with its jangly Gospel songs, was replaced by a modern one. The conservative school literature was abandoned for the Pilgrim Press material. The faith missions of independent bodies were finally dropped, and all benevolence money was put through the regular denominational apportionment for world service.' This is the abridged account in the very words of *Advance*. It is not necessary to comment. Modernism here draws a picture of itself which would shame anybody save Modernists. . . . In the old days, Congregationalism had two flourishing organs, the *Congregationalist* in Boston and the *Advance* in Chicago, both *weeklies*. It has shrunk to the point of combining the two in a monthly with 12,000 subscribers." The last two lines tell the story of what Modernism brings about by its very destructiveness. Under the curse of Modernism all spiritual endeavors are bound to perish.

J. T. M.

**The Auburn Affirmation Defended.**—In the Southern Presbyterian Church the Auburn Affirmation is a subject of discussion on account of the attempts that are made to unite the Northern and the Southern Presbyterians. Dr. Dunbar H. Ogden, chairman of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church U.S. (Southern Presbyterians), published the following sentiments on the Auburn Affirmation, showing how people of his type endeavor to justify the radical, destructive planks of this statement and how easily the descent from truth to error can be accomplished.

"Some persons seem to think that all signers of the Auburn Affirmation, now alive, are either unorthodox themselves or else are sponsors of heresy. To such persons in order to damn a man theologically you need but say, 'He signed the Auburn Affirmation.' Doubtless there are many officers and members of our Southern Presbyterian Church who have not a clear idea of the content and the historic setting of the Affirmation which some twenty years ago was signed by 1,283 ministers of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Certainly a large number of the signers of the Auburn Affirmation are dead. Hence it would be safe to say that of the approximately ten thousand ministers in the U.S.A. Church today not more than seven or eight hundred signed the document. The following statement of fact with a few comments may throw some light upon the bearing of the Auburn Affirmation on the question of reunion between the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.

"In the year 1910 the General Assembly (U.S.A.) adopted 'Certain Essential and Necessary Articles of Faith.' These articles numbered five and became the well known 'Five Points.' In 1916 and again in 1923 the U.S.A. General Assembly reaffirmed these Five Points as essential in the admission of a man to the ministry. It is a significant fact that

the same Five Points were presented to our Southern General Assembly more than once and that our Assembly refused to take action similar to that of the U. S. A. General Assembly. The Five Points are as follows:

"(1) It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide, and move the writers of the Holy Scriptures as to keep them from error.

"(2) It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.

"(3) It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that Christ offered up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God.

"(4) It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards concerning our Lord Jesus Christ that on the third day He arose from the dead, with the same body in which He suffered; with which also He ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father, making intercession.

"(5) It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and the supreme standards of our faith that the Lord Jesus showed His power and love by working mighty miracles. This working was not contrary to nature but superior to it.

"Many in the U. S. A. Church deemed this action of the General Assembly a modification of the minister's ordination vow in an unconstitutional manner, that is, without an affirmative vote by two General Assemblies and by three fourths of the Presbyteries. They also thought the specific language used in the statement of the essential doctrines constituted a too greatly restricted interpretation of the vows taken by a minister at ordination.

"It were well at this point to refresh our memories as to the ordination vows that have to do with doctrine:

"Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

"Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"

"Much unrest developed in the U. S. A. Church and danger of a division arose. In that crisis the Auburn Affirmation was issued, and in it we find a strong protest against the alleged changing of the ordination vows by an act of the General Assembly rather than by constitutional procedure. We also find in the Affirmation the following important doctrinal statement:

"Furthermore, this opinion of the General Assembly attempts to commit our Church to certain theories concerning the inspiration of the Bible, and the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the Continuing Life and Supernatural Power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We all hold most earnestly to these great facts and doctrines; we all believe from our hearts that the writers of the Bible were inspired of God; that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh; that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and through Him we have our

redemption; that having died for our sins, He rose from the dead and is our ever-living Savior; that in His earthly ministry He wrought many mighty works, and by His vicarious death and unfailing presence He is able to save to the uttermost. Some of us regard the particular theories contained in the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923 as satisfactory explanations of these facts and doctrines. But we are united in believing that these are not the only theories allowed by the Scriptures and our standards as explanations of these facts and doctrines of our religion, and that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, whatever theories they may employ to explain them, are worthy of all confidence and fellowship.'

"Now to the comments concerning the bearing of the Five Points and of the Auburn Affirmation upon the question of the reunion of the U. S. A. and U. S. Churches.

"(1) The first of the Five Points deals with the doctrine of inspiration. The Confession of Faith and ordination vows commit a Presbyterian minister to belief in the Scriptures as the infallible guide concerning faith in God and duty toward men. But do the Confession of Faith and the ordination vows claim for the Scriptures total inerrancy? Of course, no informed person holds that there is no error in the Bible that we have today. The claim is that the original manuscripts were without error. But those manuscripts are not now in existence, so far as anyone knows, and they have not been in existence for many centuries. Let us imagine a fine Christian man applying to one of our Southern Presbyteries for ordination. He makes a satisfactory declaration of his faith in Jesus Christ, he believes in the Scriptures as our infallible guide touching faith in God and duty toward man; but he cannot conscientiously commit himself to the theory that the Bible is totally inerrant. To him it seems that in places, especially in the Old Testament, the inspired writers used as a framework for their message the ideas of the age in which they lived, which ideas may not have been true to fact. For instance, to him the religious significance of the record in the first chapter of Genesis concerning God's creative work would not be impaired, even though it were proven that some of its statements are not in accord with scientific facts. If total inerrancy of the Scriptures is an essential and necessary article of faith, such a Christian man could not be ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. But few if any of the Presbyteries in the Southern Church would refuse to ordain such a man.

"(2) The second of the Five Points has to do with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, faith in which is required of all ministers in our Southern Church. With some care I have inquired into this matter, and I have been informed on trustworthy authority that today the ministry of the U. S. A. Church accepts the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, but places emphasis, as we also do, upon the essential fact of the incarnation.

"(3) The third of the Five Points deals with the Atonement. At once the question arises in what sense is the phrase 'to satisfy divine justice' used? To some persons these words seem to mean that a loving

Son is placating an unwilling Father, rather than that the Son, sent of the Father, is meeting demands of right in behalf of sinful men for whom He dies. Not infrequently persons being examined for ordination by Southern Presbyteries state that they do not accept any one theory of the atonement as a complete explanation of the stupendous fact of Christ's vicarious death, in which fact they firmly believe; and these persons are ordained.

"(4) The fourth of the Five Points deals with the resurrection body of our Lord. Here the key word is the adjective 'same.' What is really meant when it is declared that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of His Father with the same body with which He suffered? Once more imagine, if you please, a fine Christian man, applying to a Southern Presbytery for ordination. He affirms his faith that Jesus Christ truly rose from the dead, but in the light of the Apostle Paul's teaching concerning the resurrection body of the believers (1 Cor. 15:35-49) he hesitates to use the adjective 'same' in reference to the resurrection and ascension body of Jesus Christ. Think you that he should be ordained or not?

"(5) At the heart of the fifth of the Five Points is faith in the supernatural. The Presbyteries in both the U.S.A. and U.S. Churches today require of a candidate for ordination such faith.

"Perhaps these statements of fact and these comments will make it clear that the signers of the Auburn Affirmation, now alive, cannot rightly be deemed unorthodox themselves or sponsors of heresy merely because of their having signed that document. Furthermore, the Auburn Affirmation cannot be considered sufficient proof that the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is doctrinally unsound, or so greatly divergent theologically from our Southern Church as to make a reunion of the two bodies unwise." A.

**The Dogma of the Assumption.**—The Catholic weekly *America* (August 11, 1945) pleads with its readers to request the Holy Father to make the doctrine of Mary's Assumption an official dogma of the Church. Quoting the article in part, we read: "The Vatican radio several months ago broadcast a message of special significance to American Catholics. It was an unofficial but clear invitation to the faithful in English-speaking countries to petition the Holy Father for the definition of the dogma of the Assumption of Our Lady. The great festival observed in the universal Church on August 15 commemorates a belief that Catholics have held explicitly for close on fifteen centuries—that within a few days of her death the body of the Blessed Virgin was, by a singular privilege conferred by her Son, taken into Heaven. This doctrine, Catholics hold, was contained implicitly in the deposit of faith handed on by the Apostles. For more than eighty years, however, a movement has been growing to have the doctrine proclaimed infallibly. This would require an *ex cathedra* pronouncement by the Pope, similar to that of Pius IX, who, on December 8, 1854, solemnly defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception; or a definition by a general council of the Church, such as that published by the Council of Trent, four



hundred years ago, when, among other decisions, it confirmed the tradition of the utter sinlessness of the Virgin."

The writer complains that the movement is attracting little attention in Great Britain and in the United States. This "is in strong contrast to the enthusiastic leadership shown by Catholic Americans in the movement for the definition of the Immaculate Conception. Of incidental interest is the fact that although the Council of Baltimore in 1846 designated the Immaculate Conception as the patronal Feast of the United States, the American bishops more than fifty years earlier had chosen the Feast of the Assumption. Nine countries today honor Mary as their patron under the title of Our Lady of the Assumption." The article admits: "There is nothing in the Bible, nor are there any historical testimonies, directly attesting to the Assumption; but the doctrine rests nevertheless on such firm theological ground that even heretical sects as far back as the fifth century accepted it without dispute. According to Pope Benedict XIV, it would be impious and blasphemous for a Catholic to deny a doctrine that, while not defined as an Article of Faith, has been universally held throughout the Church." The writer then declares: "The Feast of the Assumption was already being celebrated in the East when Saint Juvenal of Jerusalem stated the doctrine at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. It was Saint John, the Beloved Disciple, who discovered that the Virgin's grave was empty; and it is, of course, a significant fact that no church or city has ever claimed to possess her mortal remains. Had any relics been found, they would most certainly have been proclaimed by the Church and revered above all others." The following paragraph sums up the argument for belief in Mary's Assumption: "Every Catholic is convinced that of all God's creatures Mary occupies a place apart. Many spiritual writers have shown the parallelism between the Feasts of Our Lord celebrated by the Church and those of Our Lady, and it has been pointed out that there is a close parallel in the life of Christ and His Mother. The Church celebrates His birth and hers; His presentation in the Temple and hers; and so on until we come to the mysteries of the Ascension and her Assumption. It is entirely congruous that, as Mary humbled herself in life even to the point of sharing in the death on the Cross, her Son, who held her first in His thought, should ordain a reward that she should be assumed after her death, body and soul, into heaven to share immediately in His glory." Here indeed is strange reasoning on behalf of a doctrine that is to be elevated to a dogma. Neither Scripture nor any historical testimonies attest to the Assumption. That is admitted. Still it would be impious and blasphemous for Catholics to deny a doctrine that has been universally held throughout the Church. Does mere antiquity make a doctrine a dogma? In addition, it is entirely congruous that Mary should be assumed into heaven to share in Christ's glory. Finally, no bones of Mary are found; hence the Assumption is a fact. The whole argumentation proves the anti-Christian character of papistic theology, especially in view of the fact that the Assumption of Mary is taught in the interest of her worship as mediatrix. Shrewd Thomas F. Doyle, the writer of the article, does

not state that the story of Mary's Assumption is pure fiction; that Pope Gelasius I in 496 declared one of the sources of the legend, the *Transitus S. Mariae*, attributed to Melito of Sardes, as apocryphal; and that even in the 16th century the Dominican theologian Melchior Canus and the Jesuit dogmatician Peter Canisius held that Mary's Assumption is not sufficiently attested to vindicate its character as an article of faith. Luther writes: "The papists appointed the Assumption of Mary (*Mariae Himmelfahrt*) as a Feast in order that the people might honor and adore her" (St. L. XIII:1208); and again: "The papists have made a God out of the Virgin Mary and ascribe to her all power in heaven and on earth" (St. L. XIII:1116). This the article concedes when in conclusion it says: "It is the Queenship of Mary, *the belief that God's grace flows freely through her hands* [italics our own], that should inspire American Catholics to join with others throughout the world in beseeching the Supreme Pontiff to proclaim her Assumption." J. T. M.

**Brief Items.**—The English are bothered by their rapidly rising divorce rate. It is approaching 40,000 yearly. A thorough overhauling of the marriage laws is being advocated. Lord Horder, physician in ordinary to the king, suggests in his latest book, *Rebuilding Family Life in the Postwar World*, that this idea should be equally stressed with the necessary building of many houses.—*The Lutheran*.

According to an exchange the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America is endeavoring to resume its work in the Chinese provinces of Honan and Hupeh with full vigor and to have fifteen missionaries active there before December 31, 1945. Of the fifteen, seven are new workers.

The leaders of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. are advising their congregations to postpone the erection of new buildings until help has been given to Christians living in devastated countries throughout the world. To what extent the advice given by these people can be followed in Christendom generally will depend on local conditions. We believe this counsel should be carefully considered by all congregations which are thinking of inaugurating a building program.

The U. L. C. A. mourns the death of Dr. Frederick H. Knubel, its first president, who relinquished this office only a year ago. He was born May 22, 1870, and died Oct. 16 of this year. Personally Dr. Knubel was a conservative Lutheran, who was willing to avow belief in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

The Roman Catholic Church has this fall observed the centennial of Cardinal Newman's accession to its ranks. Whoever reads his famous *Apologia pro Vita Sua* will not be surprised at his defection from Protestantism. In spite of his learning the man had no understanding whatever of the central truth of the Reformation—justification by grace through faith.

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## Book Review

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All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.

**America, Turn to Christ!** By Walter A. Maier. Lutheran Hour Messages, Easter to Christmas 1943. 32 and 341 pages, 5×7½. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1944. \$1.75.

**Christ, Set the World Aright!** By Walter A. Maier. Lutheran Hour Messages, New Year to Pentecost 1945. 33 and 377 pages, 5×7½. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1945. \$1.75.

Each of these volumes brings introductory summaries of the Lutheran Hour season covered by the enclosed addresses. Dr. Maier employs a unique method of presentation in that he operates at the microphone with a script almost twice the necessary proportions, which he then condenses as he reads. The printed volumes of his sermons bring the complete manuscript.

A study of Dr. Maier's sermons reveals a deference, in several respects, to standard Lutheran homiletical practice. The sermons employ texts, which are carefully utilized to provide the outline and scaffolding and are copiously quoted. The sermons liberally employ other Biblical extracts. Without exception they express the atonement through Jesus Christ.

The uniqueness of Dr. Maier's preaching, to judge by these volumes, is a trait which is at once a strength and a disadvantage. This is his simplicity of thought. The speaker operates with a brief series of standard applications. The Gospel message is directed to the solution of outstanding and easily recognized problems in personal life, in the home, in education, in citizenship, and in the Church. The devices for achieving this application are also simple and standard. They are: a frequent hortatory challenge; liberal allusion to current events as parallels and suggestion; direct and vigorous sketching in of the negative. The latter, to this reviewer, assumes a more helpful perspective in the extended bulk of the printed sermons than seems apparent from the reactions of some of Dr. Maier's hearers to his spoken messages. In other words, Dr. Maier's proverbial militancy is in these books ever directed to the conveying of the Gospel.

Dr. Maier's trend to simplification at times creates the illusion of mass persuasion. The printed volumes set also this item in proper perspective. He is manifestly concerned with the individual's relation to God and with the Church or nation simply as the agency toward the individual.

An interesting gleaning from this survey was Dr. Maier's evidently successful endeavor to salvage Abraham Lincoln for the communion of saints.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

**To Sign or Not to Sign.** By F. E. Mayer, D.D., Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. Tract No. 137. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 10 cents each; dozen 96 cents; 100, \$6.67.

Here is a pamphlet which many pastors have been anxiously awaiting. Dr. Mayer first presents the text of the "Agreement and Promise to be Signed by Non-Catholic Party" and then shows that this agreement is first an unfair, secondly an anti-Scriptural, and thirdly an unchristian contract. The closing paragraph presents the dilemma of a Protestant-Catholic courtship. The reviewer knows from his own ministry what heartaches develop when acquaintanceship between Lutheran and Catholic young people grows to real affection. This tract should be widely disseminated among our young people so that they may be spared the heartaches and the tears and perhaps the pangs of a tormented conscience which will come into their lives if they ignore this matter.

L. J. SIECK

**Treasures of Hope.** By the Rev. Alfred Doerffler. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 274 pages, 6×8½. \$2.00.

On the inside flap of the jacket of this book the publisher says: "Here is an ideal book of devotion for the Christian pilgrim who has passed the noonday of life. In its pages he will find that 'light at evening time' which God has promised to every believer in Christ." However, one should not think that this book of devotional material will serve its purpose only for people of very advanced years. While in the production of it older people were kept in mind and therefore also a large type has been used in the printing, yet the Scripture readings, prayers, and hymns will well serve the daily spiritual needs of the average father and mother, especially when in their household the children have arrived at the age of their teens. The book contains devotional material for four weeks, after which it can all well be repeated; also additional prayers for various occasions, such as Communion prayers, prayers in days of sickness and convalescence, and a few comforting promises from Scripture. This book supplies a real need and ought to have a large sale.

J. H. C. FRITZ

**The History of Christian Doctrine.** By E. H. Klotsche, A.M., Ph.D., D.D., Professor at Western Theological Seminary, Fremont, Nebr., and the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood, Ill. Last chapter by Prof. J. Theodore Mueller, Th.D., Ph.D. 1945. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 349 pages. \$4.50.

When on February 11, 1937, Dr. E. H. Klotsche through his sudden death was summoned out of this world, the Lutheran Church, and especially the U. L. C. A., with which he was connected, suffered a severe loss. Ever since his India days, when he served in the Leipzig Mission and had made the acquaintance of Missionaries Naether, Mohn, Kellerbauer, and Freche, he had been a reader of *Lehre und Wehre* and entertained a high regard for the position of our church body. Through a strange concatenation of circumstances his wish to join the Missouri Synod when he came to America was not realized, but the reviewer is glad to state that in Dr. Klotsche we possessed a warm friend on the

other side of the synodical fence. His *Outline of the History of Doctrine* and his *Christian Symbolics* have become favorably known throughout the Lutheran Church of America. These books are works which show that he was both scholarly and a conservative Lutheran. The book before us was nearing completion when death snatched him away. The manuscript, not quite finished, wandered hither and thither. Our esteemed colleague Dr. Mueller was kind enough to add a chapter, in which the survey is brought up to date.

The present work is more ambitious than the author's *Outline*, which appeared in 1927. While the latter work, following the plan of books on the history of doctrine like those of Harnack and Seeberg, led the student up to the Reformation era, the present volume covers the history of the Church from the beginning to our own day. Among the most interesting pages of the book are some in which more recent theologians and their productions are described.

The method of the author is simple. He states a few historical facts about the author or movement under discussion, and then he lists the characteristics that have to be noted. The remarks are usually brief and always to the point. There is no padding or other waste of words. An excellent preparation for the writing of this book the author provided for himself through producing, besides the very brief *Outline of the History of Doctrine*, the other book mentioned above, *Christian Symbolics*, where naturally many of the phenomena are treated which appear in this history of Christian doctrine. Since the work was left incomplete, the widow of the author was eager to find a well-equipped person for adding what was still missing. Our esteemed colleague Dr. J. T. Mueller kindly accepted the somewhat difficult assignment to write the concluding chapter on the Christian doctrine in its modern setting, in which present-day theological trends in Europe and America are treated. Here welcome information is given on positive confessionalism in Germany, the Barthian Movement, the Scandinavian response, Church group interest in England, the Russian soul-search, and three trends in America, viz., the revolt of Modernism against positive truth, the awakening of neo-Thomism, and the neo-orthodox halfway challenge—quite an apt title for the position of Niebuhr and others.

The book is a veritable mine of historical lore. Here and there inaccuracies may have slipped in, especially because the author was not able to make a final revision, but, generally speaking, the book is a worthy and reliable production. W. ARNDT

**The Jehovah's Witnesses.** By Herbert Hewitt Stroup. Columbia University Press, New York. 180 pages, 6¼×9¼. \$2.25.

It is not difficult to analyze the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, because this religious group never grows tired of publishing and peddling its publications. But it is very difficult to find a good, reliable, and exhaustive treatise on the history, the financial structure, the government, the missionary technique, the social and economic background of this cult. Jehovah's Witnesses have consistently refused to publish pertinent information. The author has succeeded by private interviews,



attendance at meetings, correspondence, reading their publications, and other means to gather information which is very helpful in properly evaluating this cult in its social significance. The study sheds light on many of the peculiar and antisocial practices and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses.

F. E. MAYER

**The Ease Era.** By Paul Mallon. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1945. 119 pages, 5¼×7¾. \$1.50.

This is a collection of twenty-two articles written for a newspaper syndicate during 1943-44 by the popular Washington columnist Paul Mallon. The writer takes up the cause of what he terms "common sense education" over against "the ruling oligarchy of well-meaning loose theorists" and "the educational trust," his description of the progressive education group. Mallon pleads for the restoration of discipline in both scholarship and conduct in the schools, for he sincerely believes, "The thought-origin of progressive education, its inspiration, pervaded every field of human activity in the ease era. We similarly got away from sound values, not only in child raising and education, but in international politics, where the given-word in treaty form was made to be broken, where faith in Christian ethics no longer existed. We got away from it in our own domestic politics to a considerable extent, and in business. Contracts were made to be broken. Honor was not respected. Success justified any loose course. We also veered away from sound values in finance. We destroyed the morality of money and promoted every financial artifice to escape sound facts in every direction."

The book discusses the elective system in high schools and colleges, scholarship versus mass education, undisciplined classroom teaching, sex education, the rule by the children of the home and schools of America, progressive paganism, and other symptoms of modern education. His caustic review of the report on juvenile delinquency by the Pepper Subcommittee is one of the high spots in the book.

Mallon's outspoken criticism has brought him a wave of letters from local P. T. A.'s, commentators, newspaper editors, boards of education and classroom teachers, most of which applaud his courage and offer additional evidence to substantiate his thesis.

While some of the criticism is true only of the lunatic fringe of progressive education, which is the bane of every movement, and some of his views may be questioned, the book is most stimulating, and his criticism should be heard by every Christian educator. The publisher might have set a more moderate price for the 119 pages, of which about 30 are blank or carry only the chapter titles.

ARTHUR C. REPP

**Walkin' Preacher of the Ozarks.** By Guy Howard. Harper & Brothers, New York. 274 pages, 5¼×8½. \$2.50.

Guy Howard's story of his work among the humble folk of the Ozarks has become a best seller, and as a pattern of ministerial consecration it deserves consideration, perhaps, also in this periodical. It is certainly remarkable for a minister to forsake beckoning green pastures and to devote his life to helping the pastorless communities in the Ozark area for the mean compensation of fourteen dollars a month. In addi-

tion the author knows how to tell a story well and how to depict the simple mountain people in such a way as to reveal their foibles and yet also make them dear to the reader. There is much of the charm in this book which we find in Harold Bell Wright's classics on the Ozarks. The ministry of the mountain preacher, of course, differs from that to which Lutheran missionaries are accustomed. It is largely centered in revivalism and in combating booze. To the reviewer it would seem as if at times the problem of drunkenness has been exaggerated to make a story. At least the problem never appeared to him in the way in which it is pictured in this book, when time and again he spent his vacations in the Ozarks looking for just such manifestations of human delinquency as are here described. He found the Ozark folk a sincere, lovable, and, for the greater part, pious people, neighborly and helpful, and despite unfavorable conditions, much given to industry and thrift. But all this does not mean that Mr. Howard's story does not make entertaining and also profitable reading.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

### BOOKS RECEIVED

*From Concordia Publishing House:*

**Dickie and Donnie on the Farm.** By Allene Albrecht. 28 pages,  $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ . 50 cents.

**Growing Up in Reading.** Practice Book VI. By William Bloom and Elmer Huedepohl. Consultant: Alfred Schmieding. 62 pages,  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ . 45 cents.

*From Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York:*

**From Sunset to Dawn.** By Leslie R. Smith. 125 pages,  $4\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$ . \$1.00.

*From Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich.:*

**When Christ Takes Over.** By Dr. Simon Blocker. 105 pages,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ . \$1.25.

*From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:*

**As the Small Rain.** By Bob Jones, Jr., Litt. D., L. H. D., LL. D. 190 pages,  $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ . \$1.50.

### To Our Subscribers

It has been our custom to retain the names of our subscribers on our lists for two numbers after the subscription has expired, so that the subscriptions could be continued without interruption in case a renewal came in late. We were very happy to follow this plan at extra expense, but we are now unable to continue this policy because of present conditions.

Our Government has insisted that we reduce consumption of paper and eliminate all possible waste. Because of the restriction in the use of paper it will become necessary to discontinue subscriptions for all our periodicals with the last number paid for under the subscription agreement. We shall, however, continue our policy of reminding our subscribers of the expiration of the subscription by inserting the usual numbers of notices in the second last and the last numbers of the periodicals they receive. It is our sincere hope that our subscribers will co-operate with us and the Government by renewing their subscriptions promptly upon receipt of the first notice.

June, 1943

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